

Begonias

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Begonias

by [SleepyGurl](#)

Summary

When Dream feels his heart rate speed up at the end of George's Livestream, he knows he's too far gone.

"This feels so wrong," George says and repeats. Dream clicks off the stream, the sounds of labored breathing filling the room as he tried to stem the panic he was feeling.

The next day, after he had just barely dragged himself away from the edge of oblivion and heartache he would never return from, he felt the first tickle at the back of his throat. He coughed roughly, it sounded like he had fluid in his lungs or something. Pneumonia, maybe?

But instead of coughing up mucus or phlegm, his eyes widened in shock at the taste of blood in his mouth.

Notes

This is the version of my fanfic, Begonias, but with smut. On the chapters labeled with an S at the beginning, standing for smut, there will be NSFW content. There will be a second version of the same chapter with a C, which is Clear of NSFW.

[Begonias](#) on Wattpad!

Chapter One | The Unavoidable

How do you know if you caught feelings for your best friend?

This is the question Dream types into his incognito search bar. The rain pitter-patters on the window of his Orlando flat, a background to his undecipherable feelings. He stifles a yawn, scrolling through the search results methodically, and finally seeing a quiz that piqued his interest.

Am I in love with my best friend?

He clicked on it hesitantly, reading the first question and almost immediately losing hope that this was a decent quiz.

Do you ever catch yourself staring at your BFF?

Dream rolled his eyes before deciding he should at least try to take it seriously. Begrudgingly, he chose the *All the time!* Option.

Are they the first person you call when something happens?

Dream thought about it for a moment, remembering back to the time Patches ate chocolate, or when he himself got a headache so bad he couldn't move. The first person he called was George, no doubt. But was that because he trusted him, or because he was the best person to ask?

The dirty-blond haired boy groaned, running a hand down his face as he chose the *Always*. Option.

He continued answering questions that seemed kind of irrelevant to him. *Do you get jealous when someone else is with them? Do you ever think about your future together?* Things like that.

And, in the end...

*You are...
Totally in love with your best friend.*

Dream felt embarrassment burn through his veins, groaning as he covered his face and shook his head.

He was about to take off his headphones and get something to eat when a discord notification popped up on his monitors.

Georgie

hey, wanna call for a bit? I'm bored :P

Georgie changed Dream's nickname to Clay

Dream chuckled a little bit at this, almost immediately changing it back.

Dream

What did I tell you about calling me clay??

Georgie

well, I successfully summoned you, so it's worth it.

Dream chuckled lightly, grabbing his phone to open discord there and voice call George.

"Claaaaaay-" George said, only to be cut off by Dream going "LALALALA I CAN'T HEAR YOU." Which made the shorter boy laugh out loud, and Dream's heart skip at least two beats.

"So, how's your day been?" Dream asked, taking his phone with him to his kitchen to grab a banana, and for a moment he felt proud of himself for proving his parents wrong about his grocery habits.

"I've been pretty decent, actually. I mean, my job sucks, but I was able to snag some extra hours so I can save up for when my airport opens in a couple of weeks."

Oh, right. Dream threw the peel of his banana away as he recalled their plans for the summer.

Last summer, when everything was still fine and dandy, the Dream Team made some big decisions. A, they were going to add BadBoyHalo into the team. B, they were all going to move to one house and split the rent evenly. This way, when dream finally wanted to do a face reveal, they could all record themselves doing things other than playing Minecraft. Plus, it would just make things more fun for the four of them to live together.

"Well, you don't have to push yourself you know. I can send you some money if you're short anything when the time comes." Dream offered nonchalantly. Everyone knew that out of the four,

Dream's channel wracked up the most income. He wasn't afraid to gift money to his friends, especially if they need it.

"You know I can't say yes to that." Dream could practically hear the adorable pout on the other boy's face, making him smile.

"Just know that it wouldn't be a problem." Dream opened his fridge, rummaging through things before he found some leftover pizza from the day before.

Out of which state to stay in, the Dream Team originally wanted to be in Orlando, Florida. That is.. Before they realized the prices. Sapnap was happy to announce that there was a four room four bath house for cheap in Harris County, Texas. And so, that's why most of Dream's things are packed in boxes for whenever the moving trucks get here in a week.

He, Sapnap and Bad were gonna clean up the place about two weeks before George was supposed to come. The viewers still didn't know, and they wouldn't know until dream was ready to record with them, cameras on.

If he was being honest, Dream wasn't sure if he ever would be.

"I know I'll have enough money for the travel prices." George spoke with a bit of pride, making Dream think about how cute he was for a moment before he wanted to slap himself.

"What about the first month of rent?" Dream said, no malicious intent, just trying to make sure they checked all the boxes.

"..Fuck." George said, causing Dream to wheeze out a laugh.

"No, I'm serious Dream. There's no way I'll be able to get enough to pay more than half of my first months rent with the travel expenses." The shorter boy sounded suddenly stressed, like a huge burden had been put on his shoulders. Which, Dream guessed, one had been.

"I'm telling you, George. I can handle it." Dream insisted, only to get cut off by George spitting out ideas to get the money himself.

"I could get another job, but would I be able to get one on such short notice? Should I sell some stuff-"

"*George*, seriously. I'm gonna pay for it."

"No, Dream."

"George," dream pinched the bridge of his nose in frustration, "you can give me whatever ammount you have and I can pay the rest. You can pay be back later if it bothers you that much."

For a second, George seemed struck dumb, or speechless.

"Promise you'll let me pay you back...?" George said quietly, cutely, even.

"Yeah, George. Promise." And Dream meant it, because there was no way he could say no when George used that tone of voice.

Chapter Two | Fun and Games

"George, c'mon." Dream pestered, a blush filling his face, not that George could see anyways. He picked a poppy from the Minecraft world, offering it to George.

"You're already my Minecraft boyfriend, all you gotta do is say it back!" Dream said, his voice tapering off into a high pitched whine near the end of the sentence. His character shifted, as if to say 'come oooooon' without him saying it aloud.

George was crouched and faced away from dream, so he ran around into his line of sight again, only for George to turn away again. It went down like this until George spoke.

"You know what, fine. Give me the poppy." Dream jumped up and down in celebration, dropping the poppy for George to pick up. George pulled out a flint and steel, and too late Dream realized his mistake.

"NO!" Dream yelled as George lit the flower aflame, and Dream was pretty sure he heard the fiend chuckle at his distress.

Dream crouched and looked down at his feet, walking away slowly and sadly. George made fun of him in the chat a little bit before he realized he might have actually hurt Dream's feelings. Let's just say after that, he was quick to apologise.

"Aww, Dream, I'm sorry.." George walked next to his sad character for a little while, but then he stopped.

"Hey, look at me." George advised. Dream lifted his head slowly to look at the shorter male's avatar, who was crouched next to him.

"Stay right here for a second. I'll be right back, okay?" He said, and dream slowly nodded before looking back at his feet again.

Dream waited a good five minutes for George to get back before he decided he might as well mine some wood while he waited for his Minecraft boyfriend to return. He'd keep silent while he waited.

After about ten more minutes, George finally returned.

"Okay Dream, look up." This was basically the Minecraft equivalent of 'close your eyes', and so he did.

"Okay, look back down." Dream looked back down, only to see a pretty blue flower in his hand.

"Oh, George.. You really didn't have to go all that way.." Dream knew that George could almost definitely hear his smile.

"I know, but I figured you deserved an apology. Plus, they're really pretty. Blue is way better than red." You could hear George's smirk as he gave dream the blue orchid.

"You only think that because you only see green and red as piss yellow." Dream shot back, already starting to run, and just as he had guessed, George followed along, punching air in a frantic attempt to get dream.

"Rude!" George huffed.

"Well, I mean, while you were gone I got a crap ton of wood and blocks. Were good on Iron so now we just gotta look for- WOAH." Dream suddenly stopped, almost jumping right into a lava pool. George was laughing hysterically while Dream was telling him how close he was to dying.

"Well now we have a lava pool, and I have a water bucket and empty one." He tossed em to Dream, who thanked him.

"Do your magic, Magic man." And so dream did, placing blocks perfectly and finishing the portal in under thirty seconds.

"Hell yeah Dream!" George seemed genuinely proud and happy, he even clapped for Dream. Dream felt the heat rising to his face as he and George took the time to read some donations they missed before going into the nether.

"Hey George, just wanted to say I really appreciate your drama and humor, also could you ask Dream how much he really loves you?" George read out.

"PixieStix wants to ask you how much you love me dream. So how much do you really love me?" You could hear the smirk in George's voice.

"To the sun and back, George." And while George was busy laughing, Dream had really meant it. It was actually an understatement.

"Whatever, Dream. Let's head in." Dream had to take deep breaths to let some of the blood flow away from his face as his character jumped into the nether portal, being teleported to a pretty decent, open area. It would be easy for them to find their portal again. He snagged a screenshot of the cords as he heard George speak up.

"DUDE. We are literally so lucky!" And just then he got the achievement 'A Terrible Fortress'.

"DUUDE!" Dream exclaimed, exited and filled with confidence because of their luck. He got the achievement as he followed George into the fortress, immediately going in search of a spawner.

When they eventually found it, a particularly good donation came in for George. "...I made an edit of you two on insta called *I Love Dream*." as he read it, Dream froze, his face going up in flames. No way. No fuckin way.

In denial, Dream quickly pulled up George's stream donations, scrolling up a bit. Dissapoint bit him in the ass as he understood, but humor bit harder, and he burst out laughing. It took him a good five seconds to even explain why he was laughing.

"Isle of Dream! I love Dream!" And then George just sat there, looking like he had just given up on life as dream laughed his ass off for at least thirty seconds.

It had been three hours since the stream ended. Three hours. It was three in the morning, Dream should definitely be sleeping.

But he couldn't. All he could think about was what happened earlier. It was like a broken record in his head playing over and over.

Dream had no idea how paralysing those words would be once he heard them from George's mouth

for the first time.

Three simple words that had him tossing and turning. He had even screamed into his pillow a couple of times.

He didn't go as far as to record it, but his brain was so shocked by it that it would forever be seared into his brain.

"I Love Dream."

And now, with all his heart, all Dream wants to do is say he loves him too.

Chapter Three | Unlucky Number

George was insufferable. He was an adorable, funny, awesome, insufferable idiot who Dream would probably die for without hesitation.

But George really knows how to push his buttons. The bad and the good ones. Dream swears that guy is like a beginner Mortal Combat player. No, not even that. A beginner Supper Smash Bros player.

He shook his head in frustration as he read over the terms of their 'contract'. George was being way too skeptic. I mean, Dream supposes he has a right to be, considering Dream himself is also sceptical. All George has to do is say "I love you Dream". Those are Dreams only terms.

Take a copy of the bottom left of Dream's screen for comparison.

- 1. Dream video calls George for MINIMUM 30 seconds*
- 2. Dream's camera must be centered on Dream's face for the entire 30 seconds*
- 3. George will look into the camera and say with meaning "I love you Dream"*
- 4. No filters of any kind video/audio are allowed*
- 5. Dreams face must be fully visible at all times. All parts of his face must be visible*
- 6. Dream must also subject to a 360 of his head*

"Dude I'm not gonna do a 360 of my head- this isn't Google Street View." George choked on his saliva, chuckling. Dream was watching his stream to see his reaction, and the look of pure joy and disbelief on his face has Dream on the edge of his own seat. George's smile is contagious and his laughter is even more so.

"Okay, 180 then." Dream face palmed, chuckling.

"George, no. Just. Do you agree with the terms, minus rule six?" Dreams heart was beating out of his chest as he watched George scan thoroughly through the terms, and it just got worse and worse as they went back and forth asking one another if they agree with the terms.

Eventually, the feeling of anxiety grew to the point where Dream needed to do breathing exercises if he wanted it to get better. He let out a breathy laugh as George left because he wanted to wash his sweaty hands before we called.

Once Dream sat back down, he had already come up with the perfect way to get out of his side of the deal.

I know this sounds like a douchebag move, but you have to understand it from Dream's perspective.

He loves George, as more than a friend. He loves almost everything about him, even the shit that annoys him and pisses him off.

Dream thinks he's the closest to perfect anyone can ever be.

But if he sees Dream, and he realizes that Dream's nowhere near the same level as him, the same beauty, the same charm, then he'll know he doesn't feel the same way. He looks so exited, waiting for Dream to respond to him, to agree, to let him see him and judge him.

And Dream's scared. So scared, that if Dream wasn't very closely monitoring his breathing, Dream had a feeling his emotions would tip over the edge and take complete control of the situation.

Completely fuck it up for Dream. So Dream has to control it instead. Not George, not his insecurity, Dream.

"Do you agree to the terms, George?" Dream asked one last time.

"I- Yes. I agree to the terms." George seems nervous. He swallowed after he said this, his Adams apple bobbing and showing the excitement he had, all for the chance to see Dream's face.

"Okay. Hold on a sec let me turn off the lights." Dream got up and walked over to the switch, turning it off and walking back to his laptop and headset, seeing George's bewildered and unbelieving facial expression.

"No! You can't do that!"

"Dude it's like, pitch black in here, there's not even a window." Dream said, laughing near the end at George's distress.

"Chat! Chat, side with me here, he can't do that right??" George asked, frantically looking to the chat for answers.

Someone donated, ratting Dream out for disobeying the 5th term, that his face must be fully visible. He cursed under his breath, and the mic didn't pick him up. And just like that Dream saw his way out.

"Fine, Fine, fully visible." And just like that Dream called him. He looked like he was trying to see anything he could, and he got a little frustrated with Dream, because he realized he was covering his camera with his finger.

"C'mooooon Dream."

"Hang on! Dang George." I chuckled, before showing a painting my sister did of my YouTube icon.

"He's just showing a picture of his YouTube icon." George explained to chat.

"What do you mean? That's my face!" I said, acting like I was actually showing him to confuse chat.

After the thirty seconds, George kept complaining, trying to get me to apologise. And so I did, but with an attitude.

"I'm sorry that you don't have enough love in your heart to tell me you love me." I said, actually a little bit genuine. It was kind of upsetting how much he just wanted to see Dream's face. He wasn't some mystery to be solved here.

"Well *I'm* sorry you don't have enough love in your heart to show me what you look like." He retaliated with. At this point, Dream was starting to get genuinely upset.

All Dream was getting from George right now is that the only thing he wants from him is to see what he looks like. As if it will make Dream better or worse to him.

Dream doesn't know why he can't just stay same old dream until he doesn't have a choice. Until three weeks from now when him, Sapnap, BadBoyHalo and George are moving in together. Can't George just give him three more weeks? Why is that so much to ask for?

"Well I'm sorry you care more about my looks than you do about how much I care about you."

With a rage induced panic just on the edges of Dream's senses, he left the team speak.

Chapter Four | First Bloom

Dream sat at his desk just breathing for a while, trying to calm his shaking as George and Sapnap talked, Sapnap getting a bit worried about Dream. Mostly worried that he was upset at George, that they might be on each other's bad sides.

TW , Panic Aatack

When dream heard George say that Dream was being a drama queen, saying it wasn't a big deal, it made his heart rate pick up again. His hair was already damp from sweat, his hands were shaky, and his feet were tingling. Dream tried to stand up, ending up leaning on his desk for support as everything around him seemed to focus on one spot, making him look around his room, not able to rely on peripheral vision.

He needed out. He needed to get away from the stream, from thousands of people watching and judging and waiting as he tried so hard to please but it was never enough.

He took off his headphones and threw them on the floor, his hands shaking as he missed the end stream button at least three times before he finally turned off his own stream.

He was shaking and his heart was beating way to fast, someone's hand is around his throat- he couldn't *breathe*-

Everything was too much, he collapsed onto his bed and the sheets were too rough, the headboard too hard as he curled up and cried, doubled over as his shoulders shook and trembling, pricking hands pulled at his own hair just for the sake of the sensation.

He felt like he was going to throw up, he was going to die, his heart was beating too fast, his vision was fading out, he couldn't breathe, he couldn't do anything and he was going to die.

His breath was caught on his ugly sobs as he stared at nothing and everything and it was too bright, too warm, the world was at its end and he was going to die like this.

He sobbed for what felt like forever, ugly, wretched sounds coming out of his throat and tearing through his well being like it didn't belong.

TW over

It had been a while since dream ended his stream. All the people who were watching his stream flooded into George's, freaking out and worried about a loud bang that they heard before the stream ended suddenly, without a single warning.

George had put his stream on a break as he called Sapnap, worried and confused, only for them both to have a conversation centering around how this had happened before, about two weeks ago, and the viewers might just have to get used to it. It was probably nothing to worry about was another thing Sapnap said, and yet he couldn't stop worrying, nothing but Dream plaguing his mind as he resumed the stream and got off their Minecraft world, playing bed wars with Sapnap for awhile.

And then the time came around to end the stream, and all he could think about was how he was going to apologise to Dream, how he was going to make him feel better, where was he, what was he doing, if he did apologise would he even see it?

And so he hid it under a guise of confidence, a shield he recently learned to put up, something he picked up unconsciously from Dream and his effort to be someone better than himself on stream.

"You know, stream.."

"I'm really contemplating saying it right now."

Dream had finally gotten back to normal, his hair dripping and his body aching from his prolonged shaking. When he finally got up to put on his headset and apologize to his viewers on Twitter, this was the first thing he heard.

Dream's eyes widened, and he held his breath, leaning over and gazing at George's avatar. His face cam was off.

"This feels so wrong," George says and repeats. Dream clicks off the stream, the sounds of labored breathing filling the room as he tried to stem the panic he was feeling. He couldn't go through another one today, so close together.

And so he promptly typed in his apology and goodnight tweet, shutting down his computer and dragging his lead-like body over to his bed, collapsing onto it and staring at nothing, mind running wild for at least an hour before he finally shut down for the night, sleep taking him with open arms.

When he opened his eyes, they were still red and raw from crying. Dream rubbed the sleep from them gently, not wanting to bother them anymore. His throat was sore as he yawned, stretching his arms above his head.

He survived another day, and his body was complaining as loudly as possible. Dream had just barely dragged himself away from the edge of oblivion. Away from a pit of heartache he would never return from.

After a particularly deep breath, he felt a tingling sensation at the back of his throat. He coughed loudly as he started walking to the bathroom, already expecting to cough up something nasty that he would have to spit into the sink.

TW , blood and vomiting

But instead of coughing up mucus or phlegm, his eyes widened in shock at the taste of blood in his mouth.

The urge to vomit was huge, and so he ran to the bathroom now, pulling up the lid of the toilet and vomiting, the blood that was in his mouth mixing with the acid and bile that dribbled down his face. He felt the urge to cough again, stronger this time, and then the coughing fit started, blood dripping and a bit splattering with his coughing as he curled over the toilet, hands holding himself up as he willed his body to let him breathe again. He felt like he was choking as he coughed something up, something other than blood.

TW over

The coughing fit ended as Dream closed his eyes and just tried to breath. His throat was still sore, and breathing stung, but it wasn't hard for him, which he guessed was a good sign.

He opened his eyes and looked into the red tinted and vomit cloudy water, his eyes widening at the sight on a bundle of three tiny pink petals.

Chapter Five | Diagnosis

Dream wasn't stupid. He knew how to Google shit.

He swished salt water around in his mouth to get rid of the copper taste of the blood, and as he spit it out the liquid was pink.

He poured himself a glass of soda, the cold carbonated beverage stinging on its way down his throat. He typed in 'coughing up flowers' on Google, because that was the most identifying symptom he had. And then it popped up.

Hanahaki disease symptoms..

Dream choked on his soda. He'd heard of Hanahaki, what fanfiction reading kid hadn't? The shit was a make believe disease, or at least he thought it was. There was no way it was a thing. A disease from unrequited love? It just didn't work out scientifically.

But then he saw articles that weren't about fanfiction. Ones that didn't even mention the word Hanahaki.

Virus invades plant pollen, causing plants to become parasitic to human hosts...

Dream quickly tapped on the search results, opening up a very official looking website.

This virus is not contagious until the very end of it's lifespan, which also happens to be the end of the lifespan of anyone harboring it. The only known cure is surgical removal, and a vaccine is in its early stages..

Dream was quick to look up the prices of the vaccine, and he blanched at the price of it. It was over a million dollars. He moved back to the website, hoping for an answer.

Research shows that dopamine is fatal to the virus, and is the main composition of the vaccine.

And then dream googled dopamine. He scoured the internet for answers, a way out. But none of them were good ones. All of the answers he found were long term things, and he couldn't afford that, this virus had time working against him. His research shows that in one and a half to two months he'll be hospitalized, and in three, dead.

And then he searched dopamine itself.

Dopamine, also known as the love hormone, is a naturally occurring chemical that is released by the brain when two people are in love.

Dream wanted to stab himself in the throat. Him being with someone and being in love with them was the only cure.

And George was the only one he could ever love.

Dream had an idea that would end up proving to be useful to him on his 'way to recovery'. Just the thought of having to see George and even possibly coughing up literal blood in front of him made his heart rate spike. So as barely an afterthought, he carries a black wash cloth with him wherever he goes.

As he walked through the buzzing isles of his local grocery store, he ended up needing the last minute decision.

As he pulled down his facemask and coughed into the cloth, he ended up clearing out the whole isle. With the pandemic going on, hearing him cough violently spiked fear in others, covered or not.

He folded the cloth over the few tiny petals he coughed up, putting it carefully back in the pocket of his jeans, his mouth tasting foul for the rest of the shopping trip.

When Dream got home, he rinsed out the washcloth, watching the pink petals slip off of it before, as a random idea, he grabbed one and rinsed it, putting it on a white paper towel.

He continued to wash the cloth with dish soap until the water ran clear instead of red. He wrung it out as best as he could before he stared at the petal for awhile.

It almost definitely came from a beautiful flower, from how the dainty pink petal looked. The thing that was killing him from the inside looked harmless, like something you'd stop to take a picture of if you happened to pass by it on an afternoon stroll. He shook his head from the sheer irony of it, pinching the bridge of his nose.

He grabbed his phone, scrolling through Reddit until he found a flower lovers group. He took a photo and posted it, asking anyone if they knew where the flower was from. Lied and said something about how his son had given him a single petal and he was thinking about growing a plant, because it looked beautiful. It was to strike empathy, to get more people to answer.

And then he left it so that he could start on editing his video.

Dream cracked his knuckles, leaning back in his chair until his back cracked too. He was in his office room, the room he recorded and edited videos in. He had just finished editing his video, and after thinking about it for awhile, he scheduled it to go up tomorrow.

It was time to do something he was dreading. It was time to check his messages.

When he opened up discord, the first thing he noticed was forty three messages from George. And so, tiredly, he started reading them.

George

Dream? Are you there?

Dream I swear if you're ignoring me over something so petty.

Your stream just flooded into mine, it's like you did a raid.

They all seemed worried about you. Are you okay?

Seriously Dream, everyone's freaking out. I don't know what to do.

Sapnap tells me it's fine but I don't believe him.

Something about this happening before? I still don't get it, what happened? Are you okay?

There were a lot of messages like this. He scrolled to the very bottom.

George

If this is because you seriously think I don't love you, then you're wrong. I care about you more than I should, honestly. I don't know what I'd do without you.

You know what, I'm gonna say it. I'm gonna say it on stream and I'm not gonna be afraid of it. You want to know why?

Because you're my best friend and I love you, Dream.

Dream didn't get to the toilet in time to catch the gore. There would always be a blood stain on his carpet, because if all George sees is a friend, it would be back-breakingly hard to get him to see Dream as anything else.

And dream was going to die.

Chapter Six | Moving Out

"We should call it the dream house."

George made the comment offhandedly right after he and George had ended their streams. Dream was shocked into silence.

"Wh.. What?"

"The Dream House. The house we're all moving into within the month??"

Dream promptly wheezed, laughing hard as he listened to his friend's ignorance. George looked very confused, in that sort of happy way, kinda like he wanted to know what was so funny so he could laugh too.

"We are *not* going to call it that! Oh my god, fuckin Barbie's Dream House lookin-" Dream was cut off by his own laughing. George looked lost.

"Is this some sort of American thing I'm too British to understand??"

Dream only laughed harder.

Today was the day. Today was the day he got all his things unloaded into the moving truck so it could be moved into the new house.

If Dream was being honest, most of his things could probably fit into his car if he really tried. What he was most worried about was his monitors, his TV, those fragile things that he wouldn't risk putting into the trunk of his car.

The drivers of the moving company were going to get paid extra to drive slower so that his things wouldn't get thrashed. He'd probably be able to sue if one of his monitors was broken.

It was three am when he got up to load the things into the truck so that the people there could get going on driving, and they would get there at nine, eight in that time zone, which meant they would be going on a hell of a trip.

But then again, he would be too. He was going to pack all of his things up and leave in an hour or so, so he would get there at eight, seven in that time zone. It was gonna be a really tiring drive, but he wanted to take his car and not have to pay someone else to bring it.

Dream begrudgingly started bringing boxes out to the elevator of his apartment building, using the rolling thing that the moving truck came with. It would be about an hour until he was finished, so he cracked his knuckles and prepared for a massive headache.

Dream flopped onto the floor of his empty apartment, groaning. Everything was gone, and now he had fifteen minutes to get ready to drive for fourteen and a half hours. His breathing was labored and his hair was drenched in sweat, his head pounding.

He really wasn't prepared for today. With all his recent worries about *literally dying*, Dream didn't have much time to think about the move in, or how much heavy lifting it would entail, or how long he'd be driving, how many piss stops he'd have to make, ya know, the usual travel concerns.

His breathing suddenly caught, and dream coughed into his hand, using his off-hand to grab the washcloth in his pocket for him to wipe it off and continue to cough into.

Recently, he'd been coughing up tiny, shriveled up leaves. He guessed that the plant learned it didn't need them or something, so as they were killing them off, Dream was coughing them up. Dream washed off the cloth for the last time before he grabbed his backpack, slinging it over his shoulder and wishing he had kept pain killers in his bag.

It was halfway through the drive, and dream was listening to music when he got a phone call.

Hope poked at his chest that it was George, but he checked the name, and it was Sapnap. Of course it was, it was five am for George. Dream grumbled under his breath as he answered the call.

"Hey, Sapnap. How's it going?" Dream said, making sure his eyes were on the road.

"How many times have I told you to call me nick when we talk outside of YouTube?" Sapna-Nick, asked, and Dream sighed.

"Old habits die hard, I guess." But as true as this was, this wasn't why Dream called everyone their YouTube names. In a way, the whole moving in thing hadn't caught up with him yet.

Everyone but him seems more comfortable when someone calls them by their real names when they chat outside of videos, but for Dream, him calling people their game names gave him a shield. A sort of barrier for his heart, in a way. It made it feel like they couldn't tear him apart on a whim if they wanted to.

"Yeah yeah, whatever *Dream*." Sapnap knew Dream didn't like being called clay, on YouTube or otherwise, and he respected it. Everyone else did too. It made Dream chuckle a bit because of how Sapnap said it.

"So, if it isn't obvious, I'm on my way now." Dream said, and with that Sapnap turned on his camera for Dream to sneak some glances away from the road to see his boxes in his respective room.

For some reason, they had all chose rooms before actually saying they were gonna buy the house. It was pretty late for all of them, around three am for him and Sapnap, when Dream had proposed the idea. And he had no idea it would end up going so far.

Here he was, last summer, chuckling with his friends about the mere possibility of moving in

together, saying he called the master bedroom because he had the most subscribers.

Here he was now, driving to the house of his fucking dreams, from his best friends living in it to his crush living in it.

Dream felt a sensation at the back of his throat. He immediately left the call, coughing violently as he pulled over, using one hand to type 'crappy connection, call you later' as he opened the door of his car, getting out and coughing blood and petals on the side of the road. And deep down inside, he was fucking terrified.

Because he knew it would only get worse from here.

Chapter Seven | Moving In

When Dream pulled up to the house, the first thing he noticed was how much more huge it was in person. The second thing? His back really fuckin hurts, and his legs are jelly.

He slowly got out of his car after he parked it on the side of the road. The place was practically a mansion!

As he leaned back to see the house in its full glory, his back popped almost comically loudly, making him wince and lean back more to finish popping it.

He yawned, stretching his arms over his head and hearing a couple more small pops.

"Hey Dream, how was the fourteen hour drive?!"

And then there he was. Sapnap, in all of his short glory. Dream couldn't stop himself from smiling as Sapnap opened his arms wide with an eyebrow raised.

"This place is great, am I right?" Dream chuckled, which eventually turned into wheezing laughter. Sapnap could only hold back his laughter for so long before he gave up, laughing with Dream.

"It's so good to see you man." Sapnap said, offering a hand so they could shake. Dream grinned as he ignored his hand, wrapping his arms around him and squeezing until he heard Sapnap's shoulders pop, and then he let go.

"Nice to meet you, *Sapnap*." Dream said, mimicking the way he had said 'Dream' while they were on the phone earlier. Sapnap punched him on the shoulder, laughing with him.

Maybe this whole moving in together thing wouldn't be so bad.

Moving in was going terribly.

Dream had a good twenty minutes to cool off and chill out before Sapnap loudly announced that his moving truck was here, and it was time to bring his stuff in.

Dream was currently lugging a box up the stairs with Sapnap.

"My fingers are slipping mY FINGERS ARE SLIPPING PLEASE HURRY-" And so they did, just barely getting to the second floor before they almost completely dropped it on the floor. It was filled to the brim with clothes, so it wasn't fragile, but it was very, *very* heavy.

Dream's arms hurt to move. It's kinda alarming how quickly his body can go from 'You haven't moved all day get the fuck up and walk.' to '*For the love of God sit down take a break hhhh-*'

Dream flopped onto the carpeted floors, Sapnap sitting next to him soon after, both of them breathing heavily.

And then Dream felt a tickle at the back of his throat. Dream held his breath as he got up, barely muttering out an 'I need to use the bathroom' before he started coughing into his hand, the washcloth downstairs in his backpack.

He made sure to catch any drips that got through his tightly cupped fingers before he got into the

bathroom connected to his room, turning on the fan to help drown out his violent coughing as he leaned over the toilet, his throat burning.

TW, Panic Attack and Vomiting

Dreams breathing picked up as his lungs kept forcefully heaving, more and more petals and leaves finding their way out of his throat. This was more than usual, he was choking, he couldn't breath.

The tips of his fingers started to tingle and his stomach was doing backflips. He suddenly felt like the room was boiling, sweat beading on his brow as he continued to cough.

Soon the nauseousness was too much to handle, and he felt his stomach heave as he tried to throw up, his breakfast spoiled as it came up his throat.

Along with his sick came a blossom, almost a whole flower, albeit a small one. It must have been stuck in his throat, that's why it took longer for him to get over this.. session.

He took in gasping breaths, but he still struggled to get in air, and then he started sobbing.

He would give himself ten seconds. Ten seconds to cry and let everything out.

And so he gave himself ten seconds to fall apart before he would stitch himself back together again.

TW over

George must have refreshed the page five times. He just had to check that the information was real. His airport had opened early, and it gave him a new option for transport.

F light to Texas - one seat available for a flight in three days.

George laughed in amazement at his luck as he canceled his previous flight, booking this one.

"Huh." He said, his bewildered face widening into a huge smile. This was going to be one hell of a surprise.

When dream had dubbed himself ready to deal with the heavy lifting ahead of him without anyone knowing what happened less than five minutes ago, he left the bathroom and went downstairs.

What he didn't expect to find was Sapnap, who had brought one of the two couches Dream had brought from his apartment into the living room, just so that he'd have a place to wait for Dream.

Dream chuckled when he walked downstairs, his lips pulled into a smile. Sapnap turned to him, an exasperated look on his face as he spoke.

"Dude, finally. It's been like, ten minutes. What were you even doing in there?" Dream chuckled, before looking out the window.

"I just needed to take a second and take it all in," Dream sighed happily, "I mean, I'm actually here, and we're all moving in together. We have this huge, amazing house, and we finally get to meet each other and just. Be happy together."

Sapnap made a barfing noise, and Dream moved quickly to punch him in the shoulder, making Sapnap complain through his laughing.

"Don't get all sappy on me, okay Dream? Let's wait until we make this house look more like a home before we reminisce." Sapnap slapped him on the back before he started to walk to the front door.

And Dream still needed to take a break to appreciate his past decisions. Even if he wished he had experienced more things before he got 'sick', he was glad.

Because now that they were all going to be together in the same place, he would finally be able to get to know his best friends as people rather than faces behind the screen.

And he'd be able to say goodbye before he passed.

Chapter Eight | Decorating

Dream flopped onto his bed, having just finished making it. It was midnight, and Dream felt like he could just about pass out right then and there. But now Dream and Sapnap were messaging George and BadBoyHalo in a group chat called "The Dream Team +1".

Sometimes, when Bad is feeling a bit mischievous, he changes it to "The Muffintees +1" and waits for Dream to notice. Today was one of those days. Instead of getting a rise out of him, it just made Dream smile.

Dream

Hey guys. Did I miss anything?

BadBoyHalo

Nope!! I'm still packing to fly in tommorow. Honestly can't believe this is happening. I'm finally moving in with my favorite Muffins!! (☺••☺)♥

George

And I'm still waiting for my airport to open :,(

Dream

Can't wait to see you all together. Also, sorry George, you'll just have to wait it out to see my hot face ;)

Dream laughed a little at his own antics, and turned off his notifications, plugging his phone in. Dream stretched for a moment before getting up to open up some of his boxes, namely the ones with clothes.

After about an hour, he had all his clothes hung up in his closet, organized by hoodies, jackets, long sleeve, t-shirt, tank top, shorts, and jeans. Yes, overkill, he knew, but it just made things easier for him in the morning.

He took apart the two boxes until they were flat, laying them on the ground near the door. And then he moved his bedside table, pushing it, well, next to his bed.

He pulled out the box with his disassembled shelves, using an electric drill to start putting it together. He heard thudding up the stairs before Sapnap knocked on his door, and Dream told him to come in.

"Oh, so that's why you aren't messaging in the group chat. George wants to know if you're up for a group call or not." He said, leaning on the doorframe and picking at his teeth a bit.

"He said he'd prefer you call and I chill with you in your room while we chat, because your phone has a better mic. Me and Darryl agreed."

Dream sighed, grabbing his phone from the charger and unlocking it, giving it to Sapnap and letting him start the call while he continued on the shelves.

"Hey Claaaaay-" George started, before he was interrupted by a loud electric drill, causing the shorter boy to laugh and Dream to smile, some blood betraying him and flowing to his cheeks.

"Sup George." Sapnap said, grinning. He got up from his position on the floor, jumping into Dream's bed and laying down.

"Dream's bed is really comfy. You jealous?" George barked out a laugh, replying with an 'As if', and then he and Sapnap just chatted together.

Dream continued putting together the shelf, interrupting them every once in a while to drill, but they didn't seem to mind that much.

Once he was done, Dream put it in its spot on the wall to the right of the door, which was parallel to the wall his bed was against.

Dream kicked Sapnap off his bed to put up some hanging shelves, two of them right above the headboard.

Next to his bed, to the left, was a pair of glass doors. He had a balcony that, or so he was told, would give him a really nice view of the sunrise.

To the left of those doors Dream put up a mirror. It was a mirror with shelves on it, and it was decently big, big enough to show the upper half of his body with how he positioned it. Dream put his hands on his hips and smirked into it.

Next, he hung up a painting his sister made for him of his YouTube Icon, and his golden play button right next to it. They were next to the shelves above his bed. Sapnap yawned, stretching his arms above his head.

"Dream, can't you do the rest of your unpacking tomorrow and help me put my bed together? Please?" Dream chuckled a little bit, before he shook his head.

"C'mon Nick, let's get this over with." And Nick was happy to be able to slack off while Dream did most of the work.

It was at three thirty in the morning that Dream finally settled down and got ready to sleep. And yet, he couldn't. It was small things that bothered him.

The house smelled unfamiliar; it smelled new. It almost made him want to buy candles just to flush out the overpowering new house smell.

For a moment, Dream thought about putting up the string lights that his mom had given him as a house warming gift. He had to admit that the peachy-colored lights looked nice, but he just wasn't sure if it would fit the room.

After laying in bed just thinking for a good half an hour, Dream gave up. He knew what he had to do to feel at ease.

He pulled out his phone, and called George.

"Dream? What's up? Isn't it really late for you?" We're the first things George said. Dream could hear Sarnap snoring down the hall.

"Yeah, it is. But I can't sleep." Dream sighed, looking up at the unfamiliar ceiling of his new home.

"Oh. Is there any reason why?" Dream smiled. George was always the type to worry about his friends, even if he didn't always show it.

"It's just.. Everything feels so.. Nevermind, it's kinda stupid now that I think about-"

"Everything feels so new? Different?"

Dream smiled sadly. Of course he would know what he meant, George knew Dream like the back of his hand.

"Yeah."

Dream took a second to listen to the cicadas. The sound of them wasn't annoying per se, but it was more like a white noise in the background, something to distract him from the silence.

"I understand how you feel. And I think, or at least how it was with me, the only way to get rid of that feeling is to make it look and feel more like home."

Dream just continued looking at his ceiling, because he was only telling half the truth. The truth is, he always had trouble sleeping, because his house never felt like home. It felt like there was something missing. And he always knew exactly what.

Home is where the heart is, after all.

Chapter Nine | No Where Near Bad

It was two in the afternoon when Dream was dragged from sleep by the metaphorical throat.

There was laughter and jovial conversation happening down the stairs, and Dream knew immediately what was up.

Bad was here.

Dream smiled widely, pulling himself into a sitting position. Bad had always had a special place in his heart, not that Dream would ever admit it.

The guy used to be vulgar and offensive, but he completely turned himself around for his viewers and others. Dream respected him because of the sheer amount of love he had in his heart for people.

Dream's smile was erased as he winced, his head throbbing. Now that he had gotten over the initial excitement, he realized how shitty he felt.

His thick blonde hair was greasy and gross, along with his face. He smelled like shit because he didn't take a shower before sleeping last night, even after sweating his ass off moving stuff in. Dream couldn't meet Bad looking like this.

He got out of bed, his head throbbing a constant pulse as he went over to one of the boxes he hadn't unpacked yet; The Bathroom box was relatively small, and he could probably get it unpacked in a good five minutes.

But first, he thought as he dug through it, searching for his remedy. He finally closed his fingers around a pill bottle, and he started looking for the other one.

When he finally pulled them out, he went to the bathroom and used his hands to get some water from the sink to take them.

Painkillers, because this headache was beating his skull in and he could not let that ruin his mood.

Antidepressants, because even though he wasn't going to see a phycologist any time soon, they were guaranteed to chew him out if he stopped taking his prescribed medication.

Dream felt slightly sluggish as he put his bathroom together, including some towels, which he put in a cabinet that was next to the sink.

He pulled off his shirt, smelling it and immediately pulling a face as he threw it on the floor. He would pick it back up later when he would eventually drag his hamper into his room. And then Dream made the mistake of looking back into his mirror.

TW, Self Harm Scars and Mentions of Relapsing

Dream traced his fingers over the scar tissue on his lower stomach. He remembered how he felt as he marked up the same area over and over, every day meaning more fresh wounds. Each time the scar getting more and more noticeable.

And now, he knew it was never going to look the same. It didn't look like most self-harm scars. He never cut anywhere else, just this one spot, as he vowed to never let anyone see it.

He found himself thinking of Sam, and how he left after Dream broke that vow. Dream had, unfortunately, relapsed when they broke up a year ago. But now it had been two months since he'd cut.

TW over

He pulled his hand away from the memories, stripping, and getting into the shower.

When Dream had finally come downstairs, he realized that A, the living room was flooded with boxes and he'd almost one hundred percent end up doing at least half the work unpacking them, and B.

Bad looked really happy. And that's saying something because bad almost always seems happy.

But as dream saw his expression, the edges of his eyes wrinkled and his lips pulled back into a genuine smile, he knew that Bad probably needed this positive change as much as he did. He was truly happy when he was with Sapnap, even if they were just scrolling through Twitter.

He almost doesn't want to ruin the moment the two were having.

"Hey guys, am I late to the party?" Bad looked up with a wide-eyed expression before he grinned widely, standing up to walk through the maze of boxes.

Dream expected a hello, or a handshake, but what Dream didn't expect was for Bad to wrap his arms around him without hesitation. Dream was a bit taken aback at first, but he hugged back after a moment.

"Where were you, you muffin head? I was getting tired of waiting." Bad complained, but Dream could tell it wasn't a genuine complaint, more a light-hearted jab at him.

And Dream didn't know why, but as Bad pulled away from him, the expression on his face soothed any and all worries dream had that he did anything to the moment other than make it better.

"He was passed out because he was flirting with George all night," Sapnap said from the other side of the room, not even looking up from his phone.

"Wha- Why do you even know that?!" Dream gaped, a blush rising to his face as Bad laughed a little bit at him.

"Relax Dream, we're just poking fun at you," Bad poked him on the cheek, as if to literally poke fun at him. "No need to get defensive on us." He chuckled again as he shushed Dream before he could deny it.

"Well, guys," Bad clapped his hands, "We're finally here." And then he stretched, looking around at the place.

There was random furniture everywhere, scattered in places it didn't belong and almost every square foot of ground was covered in yet to be unpacked boxes.

"And today, we're gonna unpack." Bad decided as Dream and Sapnap looked at him like he just kicked their cats.

As Bad went over to Sapnap and started dragging him off of the couch and into a standing position, Dream knew a couple of things, deep down.

One, Bad cared more for his friends than Dream did about anything at all. Whether this was something wrong with Dream, or something amazing with Bad, Dream had no clue.

Two, Dream didn't deserve friends this amazing. These two people alone are amazing enough to give him hope, even if it was misplaced.

Three, he was going to die. How could he have hope that he would live, when no one even knew he was gay?

Chapter Ten | Grocery Shopping

It was six PM, and everyone had finally moved all the furniture and boxes to their respective rooms. Dream stretched his arms above his head, hearing them pop and feeling them stretch.

They hadn't really unpacked much yet, per se. Most of the boxes were still taped up. Bad seemed to let it go, for now, thank God, instead opting to move on to 'more pressing matters'.

Bad Clapped loudly, getting the attention of the two stretching boys, watching as they turned to him, their expressions saying nothing less than 'aww shit, here we go again'.

"Our fridge is empty, and we can only eat peanut and butter sandwiches for so long.." He smiled and put his hands on his hips. "So it's time to go grocery shopping!"

Sapnap immediately nominated Dream to go with Bad, lying and saying he'd unpack more while they were gone. Bad rolled his eyes before asking Dream with only his expression if it was okay with him, to which Dream nodded.

Dream ended up being the one to drive because Bad didn't know how to drive a stick shift. However, Bad was really polite about both of them hearing music they liked over Bluetooth, asking Dream every couple of minutes if there was a song he wanted to hear.

Dream was smiling while the other boy vibed, Bad eventually becoming enthusiastic enough in his singing to convince Dream to sing along, and Dream knew their semi-decent duet would be stuck in his head for hours.

Dream's initial worry was that they hadn't bothered with a list, but then, as he and Bad wandered the isles, he realized that it was pretty easy to just pick up anything they felt like they could need.

Dream had always been scolded for under preparing as a kid, so this was a pleasant change. It felt good to just go with the flow.

Plus, it was fun for Dream to see how much unhealthy food Dream could put into the cart before Bad noticed and made him put it back, always ending with them both laughing hard.

It took a while before they got to the counter where they would pay, but Dream couldn't care less. The two-hour shopping trip felt like half an hour, with how much he was smiling and laughing.

The way they had situated paying for groceries was easy. Every week, they would each surrender fifty dollars for groceries, and if there was any extra money, it would go into next week's groceries.

They forgot to ask Sapnap for his share of the money, so Dream just decided he'd pay it, despite Bad's continuous complaints about how it would probably be four hundred dollars for how much they got.

Most of the things they grabbed were the general cold items that wouldn't have survived the journey through the Texas heat, like milk, cheese, meats, and vegetables. Dream was proud to say that Ice Cream was also added to the list, snuck right under Bad's nose.

As they loaded up the backseat and trunk of Dreams car, he couldn't help but watch Bad's expression. He was just so... Genuine. So easy to read, like an interesting book.

Bad fanned his face, complaining about the heat, but you could tell it was half-hearted. He seemed content with this new life, glad to be living with people that he cared about, people that made him smile without even trying.

As they climbed back into the car, Dream kept seeing how happy Bad seemed, over and over in his head. It made him happy to see his friend happy, but he didn't realize the frown that slipped into his face.

Sometimes, when he was lost in thought, Dream would think of mind-bending psychological questions to ask himself; It would give him something to think about.

He found himself thinking back to a question he asked himself while he was in his sophomore year of high school. Back when he was still a little fool.

When someone has depression, does everything just feel duller? Would someone with depression feel happiness and sadness in a completely different way than others?

Before he started to take antidepressants, getting up in the morning took serious effort. When he woke up, there were no good mornings. Just miserable feelings, and an endless loop of self-hate.

Even if he did have a good day, he never saw his own smile as bright as any of his friend's smiles. So he'd fake it. He'd make himself seem happier than he was.

His psychologist told him it was a way of him protecting others from the way he felt inside, and he believed her. She knew more about mental health than Dream probably ever would.

But eventually, the line between his real and fake smiles blurred, until he couldn't even tell what was real or what wasn't.

So, will he ever, truly, feel happiness in the same way his friends do? Would he ever be able to smile just as wide, laugh just as loud, and actually do it without extra effort?

He had no idea. His ignorance was terrifying to him sometimes, but he didn't know the answer to that question. So he guessed he'd probably just have to learn through experience.

A song he could deeply relate to at the moment started playing, and he had a feeling that Bad was snooping through his playlists as Dream reached over to turn it up a bit.

Maybe he would never be as happy as anyone else, but Dream would sooner take an L than stop trying just because he was dying.

He would live the rest of his life to the fullest. He'd convince the others to go cliff diving, sky diving, bungee jumping, to go on a roller coaster repeatedly until they vomited, bake a pie, eat dinner with his favorite people, and maybe, just maybe, he could... Come out to them.

Dream hummed the tune as his mind wandered, oblivious to the worry on Bad's face.

Chapter Eleven | Dinner

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

By the time Dream and Bad got back, it was around eight thirty. Unloading the groceries from the car took half an hour, because Bad kept making him smile and laugh to keep his mind off the work.

"I'm hungryyy." Sapnap exclaimed loudly while Dream and Bad were putting away the groceries. Bad sighed, and Dream noticed he had kept some ground beef and tortillas on the counter.

"No. No way, Bad, you need to get some sleep." Dream scolded, even though he himself hadn't slept much. But with bad it was different.

Bad's used to a time zone two hours faster than this one, and it was obvious from the bags under his eyes that he was really pushing his sleep.

"Dream, you guys need to eat something other than peanut butter and jelly-!" Bad grabbed the other side, but didn't pull. He knew all hell would break loose if the meat got all over the place.

"I'll tell you what, I'll buy your favorite take out. Just name it." Dream offered, letting go of the meat to put away the tortillas, despite Bad's loud 'Hey!' of protest.

"Uh.. I might have already ordered pizza." Sapnap looked up from his phone, a slightly apologetic look on his face.

Dream and Bad slowly turned towards him, glaring daggers. Then they turned to each other and smiled, Bad putting the meat away and Dream cracking his knuckles.

"Aww shit." Sapnap said, dropping his phone and slowly standing up, not breaking eye contact with Dream and Bad.

And suddenly, he bolted towards the stairs, and Dream and Bad ran after him. The adrenaline in the air was like static electricity.

Sapnap screamed as Dream almost managed to grab his ankle, but he just barely slipped out of his grasp.

"Bad!" Bad nodded, continuing the Chase until they got to the gaming room, in which Sapnap ran around the couch in circles, Bad following him.

Until suddenly, Dream was added to the mix, and Dream caught Sapnap's sleeve, laughing in triumph.

But it was a decoy! Sapnap slipped his arms out of the jacket and laughed at his own victory as dream threw it on the ground, growling.

Dream and Bad started chasing him again, but Sapnap had a headstart, and he somehow managed to hide somewhere.

"Ooooh Niiick~" Dream called, ripping open every door he saw. Sapnap didn't have many places to hide; Most things weren't unpacked.

"Come out you muffin!" Bad called, looking in a different room. And then Dream had an idea.

He held his finger over his mouth, signifying for Bad to be quiet. Bad listened, mimicking the gesture while Dream opened the door to his room, cupping his hands around his mouth.

"Red Robin." He waited for a moment.

"Yuum." It was coming from his closet, since Sapnap knew it would be full. Dream and Bad inched towards it, Dream counting down from three.

They tore open the closet and Sapnap screamed. He was completely cornered. There was no escaping it.

Bad tackled him to the ground while Dream held him down, tickling him while he thrashed, mixtures of screeching and laughter spilling out of him.

Eventually Bad decided to take pity on Sapnap, stopping in his assault while Dream followed suit. Sapnap was gasping for air, taking deep, labouring breaths.

And then the doorbell rang.

Dream and Bad made eye contact before they bolted, Sapnap struggling to his feet to follow after them.

It didn't take long for the three of them to absolutely devour the pizza, but Dream still felt hungry. They had ordered two pizzas, Bad and Sapnap each ate about half of one, but Dream ended up eating an entire pizza and still feeling hungry.

"Dream, oh my god.. If you keep eating you're gonna get sick and throw it all up again." Bad said as he put a hand on Dream's shoulder to stop him from looking through the fridge.

"Are you sure you aren't sick or something?" Bad said, examining him. He seemed more skinny than when they had last video called.

"Wha? Yeah, I'm fine. Why?" Dream closed the fridge, looking down at himself. He was checking for any blood, but he didn't show his concern.

"Nevermind.. It's nothing." Bad sighed, smiling. He started grabbing everyone's plates and putting them in the sink.

"No, no. Bad, let me do dishes." Dream offered, gently placing a hand on the boy's shoulder.

"You should go get some rest. You look like the walking dead." Bad smiled tiredly at Dream, and it was then he knew he had made the right decision by offering to do the dishes.

"Yeah, okay.. Thank you, Dream." Bad said, hugging him with one arm before he went to say goodnight to Sapnap, and Dream turned the water on hot.

Dream felt himself zoning out as he did the dishes, steam rising from the hot water into his face.

His hands were turning red but dream couldn't feel the pain, his thoughts on other things. That was, until his hands got so numb from the heat that a plate slipped out of them and shattered into the metal sink.

Sapnap looked up from his place on the couch, eyes wide. Dream was a bit shocked himself.

"Sorry, I'll just. Don't worry about it." Dream said, turning off the water and reaching into the soapy sink blindly for the porcelain. He didn't realize how stupid this was until his ring finger slid across a particularly sharp piece of porcelain.

Dream pulled his hand back with a hiss, his finger bleeding heavily. Sapnap scrambled up to help, and Dream could tell he was saying something, but he couldn't tell what.

TW, Panic Attack

Dream's ears were ringing, and the only thing he could see, smell, and feel was the warm, wet, tangy blood.

His hands started shaking and his breathing sped up, and then all he could hear were memories of his own coughing and the steady drip of the blood in the water.

The tips of his fingers and toes tingled, and he couldn't breathe-

TW over

And suddenly he was snapped back to reality, watching as Sapnap scoured the boxes for medical glue and bandages, and he realized something.

Dream himself was way more trouble than he was worth.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter End Notes

From now on I'll be adding a little note at the end of every chapter, saying if it's the first or second chapter of the day, so you know to expect any more.

Generally I post two chapters a day, but when I feel like writing more, you can get a chapter labeled 'bonus chapter'!

Also, just a reminder that I love all of you guys

Chapter Twelve | Swimming

It was ten o'clock at night, and Dream's finger still stung.

It hadn't been as bad as he and Sapnap originally thought, And they were able to clean it up and use a band-aid and some medical glue to hold it together.

The band-aid limited the movement of his finger a little bit, but it wasn't as bad as it could've been, and for that Dream was relieved.

He sighed as he finished posting on all his social medias that he was going to take a break from YouTube for a little while, turning his phone off and sliding off of his bed.

Dream stretched his arms above his head, a groan slipping from his mouth as he felt the stretch.

He moved to his balcony doors, swinging them open to be met with the hot air. He closed his eyes at the breeze, taking a deep breath.

There was a smokey smell in the air, like someone had cooked out earlier. There was also the smell of the grass and the trees, and..

And there was chlorine. Dream had completely forgotten the house had a pool. Dream looked down into the backyard, their moderately-large pool looking back at him invitingly.

Dream smiled a bit. The last time he had lived anywhere with a pool was when his family lived in an apartment complex with a small swimming pool, that you paid extra for access to.

Dream reluctantly left the balcony and it's welcoming, familiar heat as he went back into his room, stripping and changing into his green shark patterned swim shorts.

He thought for a moment before he pulled on a grey tank top. It wasn't worth the risk of someone coming outside and seeing his scar.

As he went downstairs he checked to make sure the band-aid he had used was waterproof, brushing his hair back with a hand before he went into the backyard, sighing happily at the hot air enveloping him.

He went to their shed, going around the side to the pool controls, flipping on the lights and jets. He made a note in his mind to buy chlorine and a pool net.

He walked around to the other side, the shallow end, slowly setting his foot on the first step and watching the water rush around to accommodate it.

He shivered a bit. The water wasn't cold, but it was cooler than he had expected it to be, considering how hot it was outside.

He took another step, then another, and eventually he was hip deep, this being the only depth he can get in the shallow end.

He waded deeper, glad that the change in depth was more gradual than most pools. Their pool went a maximum of ten feet, but it was a kind of slow slope rather than a steep drop.

Dream held his breath, dunking himself the rest of the way under so he could get used to the temperature of the water. As he pulled himself out again, he brushed his wet hair back and out of

his face with his hand.

He swam over to the side of the pool, where there was a built in stool type thing to rest on. Dream sat there, just moving his legs back and forth in the water as he let his mind run.

He wondered what it would be like to swim with the rest of the boys. He smiled at the thought of Sapnap splashing Bad and Bad calling him a naughty muffin, and then Dream would splash George and-

George. Dream felt his heart and lungs clench as the air was stolen from him. He forgot that George was going to come. Eventually, George was going to be here, and as much as Dream longed for him, he knew that it would only make his death come quicker.

He sighed, swimming away from the bench and then just swimming a few laps around the pool before his emotions settled again, and he just let himself float, staring up at the stars.

How many people would Dream hurt, just because he was too scared to ask George to be with him? How many people would be struck by grief when he passed?

Would he make his parents cry? Would they weep for their child, taken by something they would never truly understand?

Will they be upset at him for never telling them the type of people he loved?

And the team.. Would they stop making videos because of him? Would they not be able to stand the thought of living in this house, swimming in this pool, without him?

How many people would miss him?

Would George be one of them?

Would his favorite person in the whole world weep for the life Dream wasn't able to live? Leave flowers on his grave every birthday? Wish Dream had just told him, so it wouldn't end this way?

Dream exhaled all the way before closing his eyes and mouth, feeling himself sink to the bottom as he planted his feet, bending his knees and propelling himself to the surface just as the burning of his lungs had started to get unbearable.

But he breathed in just a second before he reached the surface, the Chlorine water going into his lungs along with the air, and Dream found himself hanging onto the side of the pool desperately as he coughed and hacked.

He realized too late that along with the water he was coughing up, there was blood. He had started up another fit completely on accident.

His chest and throat heaved, and more than once Dream had accidentally let his hands and himself slip back into the water, but he was always able to pull himself back out.

Eventually it ended, and Dream just took a second to breathe deeply. He needed to get the air back in his lungs and feel normal again, unless he wanted the fit to repeat itself.

He swam to the stairs of the pool, climbing out and then going back to the mess of crimson he had left on the poolside. He used the water from the pool to clean up the ground, leaving the petals, because he just needed rest.

He just.. He just needed a break.

Second chapter of the day

Chapter Thirteen | Nightmare and Breakfast

TW Torture

Dream couldn't move. His arms and legs were tied, and he was hanging from his wrists, hung up on either side of him, his legs the same way, like a starfish.

Dream roared in frustration, teeth clenched. The more he pulled, the tighter his binding got, and the more his wrists bled.

He was bleeding. Why was he bleeding?

Dream opened his eyes, previously shut in frustration, to actually look at his bindings.

Vines. Vines, covered in leaves and thorns. Vines, tied around his wrists and ankles, slowly growing their way up his limbs.

"No- No!" Dream yelled as they slowly slithered their way up, cutting lines into his skin and making him scream in pain.

"Please! Stop!" Dream screamed. The blood kept pouring, and the vines kept crawling up.

But it wasn't just blood. Petals. Petals were flowing through his veins, coming out of the cuts, falling on the ground, pink to accompany the red.

Dream Screamed as the vines got to his knees and elbows.

"Help! Somebody! Help me!" He screamed, tears falling down his face, but those only watered the flowers, and suddenly, all he could see was pink. They were taking over his body, ruthless and mean, eating away until he was nothing.

"But you're the one doing this, Clay." Dream heard a voice speak tauntingly in his right ear. The voice was too familiar.

"George- George, please, help me!" Dream screamed, his ego forgotten in how desperate he was. His shoulders and hips burned, his limbs being pulled apart. The vines were to his mid thigh.

"But Clay, I can't." George said, and then he started plucking, and Dream started screaming in agony.

He writhed as George plucked the flowers from his skin. Pluck. Pluck. Pluck.

"You're the one doing this to yourself, Clay." Dream couldn't see out of his right eye, blood seeping into it from where the flowers had been.

George wiped at Dream's tears as he sobbed. George placed his hand on Dream's right cheek, and even through the pain, Dream leaned into it, sobbing.

The vines were to his chest.

"Shh, shh.." George soothed, and eventually, Dream's tears washed the blood out of his eye, and then Dream hiccuped, looking up at George.

"How can I help you, if you don't even tell me what's wrong?" George said, worry painting his expression.

And then the vines circled around Dream's throat almost gently, and then George put his hands over them, and they *squeezed*.

TW vomiting

Dream's eyes shot open, and the boy gasped. He was soaked in sweat, and his breathing was heavy. Dream felt something start to come up his throat, and he barely had time to get to the toilet before he puked up last night's pizza.

TWs over

Dream sighed as he walked onto his balcony, the heat welcoming him as he knew it would, licking his tense muscles until they were loose yet again.

Dream figured that now was his best chance to watch the sunrise, since after that... Experience, the chances of him being able to fall asleep again are very, very slim.

And he was glad to find out that 'a good view of the sunrise' was a huge understatement, as the sky slowly started to turn a milky blue, and then pink, and then orange... Soon enough, there was an absolutely beautiful array of colors.

Dream went back into his room to grab his phone and take a photo, smiling as he snapped the picture.

Dream went back into his room, closing the doors with a happy sigh, leaning against them a bit, closing his eyes to just... Take in the moment.

He could hear the birds, even if they were slightly muffled. He could smell the scented candles he had bought, in Lilly of the Valley scent, just to really make it smell like summer. He could feel his

soft t-shirt on the sensitive skin of his scar.

And he could taste his morning breath. Dream laughed at himself. He should probably get ready for the morning, hell, maybe even make some muffins for Bad.

Even his terrible nightmares couldn't ruin his mood, because he was finally here, with the people he cared about.

Dream was playing music quietly as he danced around the kitchen, his smile never fading as he cooked up some bacon and gluten free pancakes, with gluten free muffins in the oven.

The song 'Wheels On The Bus - Melanie Martinez' was playing, and Dream was moving his hips to the beat, singing along to the lyrics he knew.

He heard a tired chuckle from behind him, and Dream almost jumped out of his skin. It was eight am now, so of course the boys would start waking up now.

"What's got you in such a good mood today?" Sappnap yawned, rubbing his eyes. When he opened them again, he zeroed in on the bacon like a predator.

"Nothing, really." Dream said, slapping Sappnap's hand as he reached towards the bacon. The boy frowned, cradling his hand.

"Wait for Darryl, Nick." Dream scolded, flipping a pancake. He wasn't the best chef; A little less than half of the pancakes were a tad burnt, but breakfast was breakfast.

Sappnap heard a yawn at the stairs, and the boy's eyes lit up. He ran over to Darryl, talking with him about the food, probably.

Dream put the pancake on the plate with the other six of them just as the timer for the oven dinged. Dream put on an oven mitten to get the tray, setting it on the stovetop to cool. Dream started counting.

It took Darryl two seconds to smell the muffins, and four to stand over them with his mouth watering, with a total of six seconds as his record. Darryl suddenly pouted.

"These are gluten free, right?" He turned towards dream, who answered with an expression that said *what, you think I'm an amateur?*

"The pancakes are too." He smiled and watched as his eyes lit up again ten fold, and as he watched them get their plates, he knew that he was going to have the best two months of his life right before it ended.

First chapter of the day

Chapter Fourteen | Fashion

Dream grunted as he pushed the couch, Sapnap, the stubborn fuck, refusing to get off for him. Dream was moving all the furniture in the living room around to make it look like.. Well, a living room.

He listened with half an ear to Sapnap and Bad's conversation in the background of his suffering.

"Soo.. What do you want to do today?" Sapnap asked, hanging on the couch with his legs hooked on the backrest, and his head hanging down off of the couch. His arms shook with the strain of holding his phone out in front of his face for ten minutes like that, but he was too stubborn to move.

"Well, I was thinking we could go to Houston, or San Antonio. Since, you know, they're nearby, and me and dream have never been." Bad tapped his chin in thought.

Actually, Dream had been to San Antonio, but he was way too small back then to remember it. Dream didn't bother correcting the muffin-loving boy.

"Nooo, that would be boorinng." Sapnap groaned, stretching his words and finally letting his arms succumb to gravity. He unhooked his legs, and Dream watched him slowly slip off of the couch.

"I literally went to Houston, like, a month ago. Let's do something else." Sapnap rubbed his eyes as his back was completely on the floor, before looking to dream with puppy dog eyes, and Dream almost immediately caught on.

"No." He said, and Sapnap, scrambled to sit at his feet, crouching down and making little whimpering along with his eyes.

Dream groaned, kicking the boy lightly as he went over to a picture, hanging it up on the wall. It was a fan made poster of the four of them.

"... Fine." Sapnap jumped up and grinned. Bad just seemed confused, watching the other boy's excitement.

"We're going for a shopping trip!" Sapnap exclaimed, and Bad just sighed, smiling, his arms crossed over his chest.

"Both of you need to take a shower first though. You both smell nasty." Dream pinched his nose for effect.

"I'm gonna go change clothes while you're at it." Dream smiled, going up the stairs while Bad and Sapnap talked a little, complaining about how they both had showered not long ago, and Dream was being Dramatic.

Dream had a lot of clothes, the main colors of his wardrobe being green, black, and grey. He had more colors, but he had to be honest with himself when he said most of his clothes revolved around those three.

Dream grabbed a pair of black ripped skinny jeans, slipping those on and grabbing a black tee with a neon green Chinese dragon on it, tucking in half of it and putting on a neon green belt, some decorative straps, and small green hanging earrings with the toxic waste symbol on them.

Dream had been the cool guy in middle school. From being a jock to having a soccer coach dad, he had screamed screamed 'popular kid'.

But when he got into high school, that started to change. He started wearing stupid-funny graphic tees, and leaning more towards 'geek' or 'weirdo'. It was around that time he decided to get his ears pierced, even if he was teased constantly for it.

He looked at himself in the mirror, adjusting small things about his outfit before he grabbed his boots. They were high top boots with neon green laces. He pulled them on and smiled at himself in the mirror, contemplating some green eyeshadow before he decided his green eyes were enough to make it match.

He fixed his hair to be messy, not that it needed much help to achieve that, before taking a photo without his face in it in his full length mirror. Once he approved of it, he walked out of his room and went downstairs.

Dream had an alt Instagram that never really blew up, since no one knew that 'DragonIndecencies' and 'Dream' were one in the same. He still posted photos of his outfits, though.

He had worried at first that people would link the photos to him, but he eventually realized that no one would know, and it gave him some security.

Dream carefully cropped his eyes out of the photo so his earrings were still showing, posting it on his alt Instagram with a toxic waste symbol as the caption, adding eight tags revolving around the outfit.

He turned off his phone and slipped it in his pocket, going to the fridge for any sort of snack. He saw the black olives he had grabbed yesterday, taking them out to snack on as he waited for the others to come down, grabbing his phone and lazily scrolling through social media.

Dream knew it was weird that he liked olives in general, let alone Black olives. But there was just something about them that he enjoyed, and so he was not afraid to say they were his favorite snack.

He closes the jar, putting it back in the fridge with a sigh as he heard two pairs of footsteps coming down the stairs. Sapnap was the first one down.

"Daaaaaaamn." He raised an eyebrow at Dream's outfit, looking him up and down. Dream laughed, punching him in the shoulder.

"Like you're one to judge, *SnapMap*-" Dream dodged the fist coming for his own shoulder, laughing at Sapnap's frustrated expression.

"I'm not judging. I just didn't expect you to be such an e-boy-" Dream glared at him, crossing his arms.

"I dressed this way before it was cool." Sapnap mimicked his words with his hand, chuckling.

"Yeah, whatever, Dream." Dream sighed, shaking his head. Bad had been watching the exchange in amusement.

"Looking good Dream. Are we underdressed or are you overdressed?" Bad asked honestly, and Dream chuckled.

"Nah, you're good. I just like to look nice in public-"

"Said no Minecraft YouTuber ever-"

"Shut up Nick." Dream said, a grin plastered on his face. He could tell they both secretly liked his outfit, even if they didn't show it.

"Let's get this show on the road." Dream said, walking to the front door with a smile.

Today was going to be great. He could just tell.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Fifteen | Shopping

Unlike the last car ride, the music selection was very swiftly becoming chaotic. Sapnap kept trying to play rap, and it was so drastically different from the music Bad and Dream were listening to that it clashed in a beautiful way, making Dream and Bad laugh out loud from the whiplash occasionally.

It took about twenty minutes to get to the closest mall with good ratings, and as Dream parked his car and climbed out, he could see why.

The place was absolutely huge, and the busiest place he'd seen since everything was closed down to prevent the pandemic from spreading.

"You guys have your masks, right?" Dream said, slipping on his washable and reusable black mask.

"Yup." Bad verified after watching Sapnap pull on a disposable blue medical mask and pulling one on himself.

"You know, I can't describe with words how inconvenient but necessary these masks are for someone who wears glasses." Bad started, and Dream could tell that this was gonna be a medium-sized rant.

"I mean, you can't see without your glasses on, right?" He said, motioning to his own glasses while Dream and Sapnap both nodded, both half listening.

"Well, with the mask on, look." And as Dream and Bad turned to him, they heard him sigh and watched as his glasses fogged up completely white.

They just sat there for a second before they both burst out laughing together. Bad seemed confused before he lifted up his glasses to at least see a little clearer. When he saw that this made them laugh harder, he couldn't help but grin.

"Oh- Oh my god I feel so bad for you-" Dream held back a cough, fear spiking in him for a moment, before the urge faded, and he was relieved.

"I know right! It's terrible." Bad said, crossing his arms and pouting after putting his glasses back on, and Dream insisted on waiting for his glasses to defog.

Okay, so Dream may or may not have lost the other two in the mall. But hey, they can do them. This way at least they're paying for their own stuff. Sapnap would call him eventually to complain. The thought made dream smile a bit.

Right now, dream was in a Zumiez, looking at a pastel green vaporwave themed crop top. It said 'Are you sure you want to delete all feelings?' in a glitched-out computer pop up, with a glitched out skull with a pistol positioned at the temple of it.

Dream wished he could wear crop tops without at least a little bit of fear, but he couldn't, because of his past decisions. But dream wouldn't let it stop him this time. He just needed to wear it over a long sleeve shirt of some kind, or even a white button-up; He'd seen people do that before.

Dream has been wanting to try a pastel/soft look for a while now. He bought a pair of high waisted ripped grey jeans about a week ago, and he was able to grab a pair of white and a pair of black fishnet leggings for later when he felt like wearing them. He was happy to report that the Jeans were high waisted enough to cover his scar without trouble.

Dream grabbed another crop top, this one is a striped long sleeve button up in the pastel colors blue and green. He already had a pair of white and green checkered Vans at home to go with the outfits.

As Dream was walking to the counter he snagged another crop top, this one just a black cropped hoodie with a checkered pattern down the sleeves and a red rose on the back.

It was while Dream was grabbing a new belt that he got the call from Sapnap. He knew it would happen, and he answered it, smiling to himself a bit.

"What's up Nick? Tired of buying your own stuff?" Dream asked, and he could hear Sapnap's pout.

"Haha, very funny. I and bad are going to meet up at the food court in half an hour. Will you be there?" Sapnap asked, and Dream nodded before realizing that he was a dumbass.

"Yeah, I'll be there. See you." And he hung up, looking setting a timer for fifteen minutes while he looked around the earrings section. He found some cute little knife hanging earrings, and then also grabbed a pair of cloud ones, and ones with red skulls.

As he finally walked out of the store a good one hundred dollars down, his alarm went off, and he went off in search of a map.

He was five minutes earlier than he thought he would be, and Dream just sat at a table, looking around. The food court was pretty big, and they had a larger variety of foods than most malls. An ice cream roll place caught his eye, and Dream went up to it with a smile, his confidence boosted as he saw the cute boy working there blush a little.

"Hmm.. can I get the banana-flavored ice cream rolls please?" Dream asked, licking at his lips a little. He had a soft spot for banana-flavored things.

"Sure, coming right up." The cute boy said, winking at him, and Dream felt a small frown slip onto his face. He didn't want to give this boy the wrong message, but it seemed like he had.

"Here ya go. Would you like some napkins with that?" The boy asked, and Dream could tell he just wanted him to say yes, so Dream shook his head no, and wandered off to find Sap and Bad.

Usually, he would've taken the number written on the napkin, and maybe gotten a new friend out of it. But this time, he couldn't.

He knew the boy would try to win a spot outside of the friend zone, and right now, Dream didn't think he could handle that.

Who would want to be friends with someone who was due to be dead in less than three months?

Chapter Sixteen | Bonding

Honestly, Dream didn't know what to expect when he saw Bad and Sapnap again.

But he definitely wasn't expecting Sapnap to come up with a frappacino in one hand and a new, glittery phone case.

Dream's eyebrows perked up, and his friends eyebrows perked up just as much at his two bags.

"Dream, I didn't know you liked shopping so much." Bad said, and Dream felt a little relieved that he didn't use his real name.

Because facemasks were normal now, the chances of someone seeing Bad and Sapnap and realizing Dream's identity were pretty low. Dream was glad they didn't have to use his real name instead of his other one.

"Nick, how long have you been here, just to go to Starbucks?" Sapnap chuckled at him. "It's Frapnap now." And he did a small pose with his Frappacino.

Bad stared at him blankly while Dream just shook his head, smiling widely. They all decided to look for a table, which wasn't too hard to find, and Dream set down his bags to pull down his mask and start eating his ice cream.

"Ooo, what's that?" Bad asked, reaching towards his ice cream. Dream pulled it away from him, glaring.

"Mine, that's what it is." He said. No one was gonna take his Banana ice cream rolls. Not without a fight.

And then suddenly, it wasn't in his hand anymore. He looked at his hands in shock, before he heard Sapnap chuckle, before watching what happened in slow motion.

Sapnap lifted the spoon, a sizable ammount of the frozen treat on it. He pulled down his mask and he licked his lips as he took the bite.

"You... Did not... Just do that..." Dream had a shadow over his expression, just his frown showing. His fists were clenched.

"Oh shi- listen Dream, I'll get you another one, on me-" He said, handing the cup back to him, which Dream snatched back.

"You better." He said, giving him a look that could kill as he took another bite, glaring holes in the back of Sapnap's head as he went up to the stand and presumably got another one.

He was satisfied to see the second cup of it placed next to him, and it made him smile to see that he had bought Bad and himself one too.

"Oh, you really didn't have to do that-" Bad, who was watching the exchange, voiced, only for Sapnap to cut him off.

"It's blueberry muffin flavored, and I made sure it didn't have gluten." And then Bad didn't hesitate to tuck into the frozen treat.

Dream was grinning and tapping his foot to the semi-familiar song playing over the loudspeakers,

eating his ice cream.

Dream was tempted to sing along to it, but while he was good at a lot of things, singing wasn't really one of them unless he put his whole heart into it.

"So, Dream, you've been busy?" Bad said, motioning to his bags. Dream smiled sheepishly, biting his lip a bit.

"Yeah, I got some new shirts and leggings and stuff. I can show you when we get home if you want, I think they'll look cool." Dream licked some ice cream off his lip.

"Sure, as long as you let me take pictures." Sapnap said, and Dream smirked.

"As long as they don't have my eyes in them, I'm fine with that." He agreed, taking another bite. Sapnap smiled, nodding, and Bad just seemed excited to see Dream's new clothes.

"Why did we choose an outdoor mall again?? It's so hot outside, I'm glad the food court is indoors." Bad said, fanning his face a bit.

"What are you, a wuss?" Dream said, narrowing his eyes. He used to live in Florida, after all.

"Yeah, this is literally one of the cooler days. Eighty degrees is cooler than usual." Sapnap said, checking the time.

"Whatever you two, you're just used to it!" Bad complained, puffing out his cheeks as Dream chuckled.

"Well, I was thinking we could stick together from now on? Maybe go to a shoe store?" Bad asked tentatively, and Dream nodded, even though he had more than enough shoes.

Dream sighed as Sapnap tried to decide between three nearly identical pairs of Converse. He wandered over to Bad, who was trying on a pair of black Converse with red accents.

"Those look really good on you, bad." Dream spoke honestly. They really complimented the red shirt he had on.

"I'm sure you're just saying that, you sweet muffin." Bad smiled at him, and Dream chuckled.

"No, seriously, you should get them. They look awesome." Dream nodded, as if agreeing with himself. Dream had a pair pretty similar to them, with red treading and shoelaces.

"Okay, okay. I'll get them. Now go find something for yourself, dummy." Bad said, pushing him lightly away, in Sapnap's direction.

And so Dream played pinball between Sap and Bad, before he finally went over to the pride section of the converse store. Maybe.. Maybe he could buy something, just to drop the hint.

He picked up a black crop top with a rainbow hood and rainbow sleeves, the converse logo on the back of it. It was his size, and on clearance, for twenty five dollars. He also grabbed some rainbow socks, buying them and quickly putting them in the less heavy of the two bags he already had.

Bad and Sapnap just started to go up to the counter, and Dream grinned, offering to cover some of the price of Bad's shoes, but not Sapnap's, despite his complaints.

The sun was starting to set when they all decided it was time to go, putting their bags in the trunk of Dream's car. It was a pretty tight fit.

Dream sighed as he looked at the sky, the colors slowly changing.

"Thank you guys." He said, and Dream and Bad looked confusedly at him.

"What do you mean? We should be thanking you, you helped pay for so much!" And this made Dream laugh, wrapping his arms around the both of them, right in the middle of the parking lot.

They had no idea how much he cared about them, and it brought tears to Dream's eyes, which he willed away.

He was so happy to be here with them.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Seventeen | Outfits and Rooms

Bad seemed to vibrate in excitement as dream slowly made his way down the stairs, and when he finally saw his outfit, he grinned.

"I can remember a year ago when any picture of you I got was you in a sweatshirt-" He started, and Dream cut him off with a laugh.

His new outfit felt really good to wear. The pastel striped shirt fit well on him, especially with the long sleeves and familiar color pallet. He had worn his grey and ripped high waisted jeans with white fishnet leggings under it, along with his little cloud earrings.

"Looking fresh, Dream." Sapnap said from his spot on the couch. He had made fun of Dream for wanting to do a 'Fashion show' for Bad, but when he saw how it upset Bad, he stopped.

"Thanks, man." Dream said sarcastically. He smiled at Bad, who seemed... Strangely emotional.

He posed for Sapnap to take a picture before he went up and changed into his second crop top, the vaporwave one, and skull earrings.

The last outfit was the most different, with his black fishnets under his ripped black skinny jeans, and a new checkerboard belt that hung off a little at the waist. He put chains on his belt loops, and then threw on a skin-tight black and white striped tank top, tucking it in to hide his scar. Then he put on the new crop top hoodie and the knife earrings.

Sapnap seemed to really like this one, grinning at him and taking three different photos. He got a hug from Bad, which he accepted with some confusion.

"Oh, I have an idea!" Bad said, his expression lighting up as he put a hand on his waist, pointing to Sapnap and Dream.

"You guys have forty minutes to clean up your rooms, and then it's time for room tours!" Dream and Sapnap blinked at him before Dream ran up to his room, Sapnap following.

Dream quickly hung up his new clothes, looking at the full closet and thinking about donating some old clothes he never wore anymore to Sapnap, before he remembered that this wasn't the task at hand and that he should probably be tidying everything up.

He unpacked one of his boxes, the one full of stuff for his shelf, putting the fanart and things in their places and hanging a couple of things on his walls.

He very quickly put together his gamer setup, almost alarmingly fast actually. His light strips were already on his desk since they were adhesive. Plus, all his cords were already bundled up to be the right lengths to not look messy, so basically, all he had to do was plug everything in and put everything in the right places.

He couldn't deny, his two monitors looked awesome. The green lighting strips basically changed the whole room to a faint green, and his light-up keyboard and PC coolers helped with this. He thought about getting more strips to put on the underside of his bed to make it glow, the same with his hanging mirror.

And before he knew it, it was time to show off.

Bad went first since he was the one to suggest it. His room was smaller than Dream's, but it felt cozier. He had a dark chocolate brown and black color scheme, making it seem dark, but the hanging plants hung up around the room made it feel homey and warm. Plus, the apple pie scented candles helped make this room feel more comfortable than any he'd been in for a while.

Then it was Sapnap. His room was.. Very empty. He had a pretty generic queen-sized bed, and it seemed like his colors were burnt orange and dark grey, and Dream was surprised at how nice it looked. Other than the bed, he had a pretty generic setup and a couple of posters, but that was it.

"... We should go furniture shopping." Bad offered, and Dream nodded along with Sapnap. Then it was his own room.

Dream had a generic white and dark brown theme, but his light-up gaming setup spiced it up, and hopefully, the LED strips would too. Bad nodded approvingly at his lights and that he kept most of his fanart, figurines and stuffed animals on display.

It made Dream happy to wake up in the morning and remember that people loved his content enough to put effort into giving him things.

Bad and Sapnap both agreed that Dream was the winner, even though Dream had no idea it was a competition in the first place.

Dream realized that the string lights his mom gave him would look a whole lot better in Bad's room, and Bad seemed really excited to receive them when Dream handed them to him.

As Dream fell onto his bed, exhausted, he found himself missing patches. Sam had taken her with him when he had broken up with Dream, and he had a feeling that Sam had done it because he knew it would hurt him.

Dream rubbed his temples, sighing. He really needed to cool off, but... It felt like forever since he'd called George. And so that's what Dream found himself doing, his body melting into a soft, cute mess the moment he heard the shorter boy's voice.

This boy would be the literal death of him.

Eventually, Dream had wandered onto his balcony while on the phone with George, the table and chairs he had put there a nice place to sit and talk, even if it was over the phone.

Before Dream knew it, he felt himself drifting off, having to wake himself up every two minutes, until eventually, Dream decided to lay on his arms, falling asleep to George's lulling voice.

George smiled sweetly at his phone, refreshing the page again. He just had to wait through tomorrow, and the next day he would finally be meeting Dream. Really and truly be meeting Dream.

He knew about the break the boy had taken from YouTube, and he had guessed it was because of the stress of moving for the second time of his life.

He hoped that when he got there, George could help the boy feel more happy and comfortable in

his new home. He smiled softly, pink rising to his cheeks as he heard the boy's adorable and soft snores.

"I'll see you soon... Clay."

First chapter of the

S Chapter Eighteen | Laid Back

Chapter Notes

SMUT WARNING

Dream groaned as the hot water of the shower soothed his bug bites, the way they burned feeling more satisfying than painful.

In hindsight, sleeping outside, on a balcony, during a Texas summer night? A horrible idea. But Dream was drowsy and incoherent, so could you really blame him?

The mosquitos were ruthless, showing no mercy on his exposed skin. Dream had counted at least ten new bites.

Dream let his mind water in the hot and steamy bathroom, it drifting into places it had no right being, but eventually, everything lead to George.

Dream found himself thinking of the boy, and how much more petite he was compared to himself. He wondered how it would feel to push his own needy body against the other boy's.

He felt himself getting turned on at the thought, looking down to his half-hard cock and starting to massage it until he was fully hard.

He thought about how easy he would be to lift, or even to pin against a wall. He thought about pinning the boy in the shower, already having prepped him, planing for this- or the boy riding him in the bathtub, pinning Dreams arms above his head as he did so.

Dream pumped his hand a couple of times, biting his lip as he moaned a little bit. He always had trouble being too vocal, but as he felt his dirty thoughts wash over him, he could barely find it in himself to care.

He thought of the boy's smile, his lips. How would it feel to run his mouth against his, to feel George pull on his hair and make him moan into the other's mouth?

A soft noise escaped his mouth and his knees felt a bit wobbly as he continued stroking himself, touching himself at the thought of George, of the boy he loved.

He thought about how his laugh sounded over the phone, peaceful and serene, and then he thought about how it would feel to have him whisper in his ear after a long day streaming.

He shivered as he imagined it, making his legs quake a bit and his hand stop for a moment before starting up again, quickening the pace. He could feel his climax sneaking upon him.

How his moans would sound as Dream fucked him slow and soft, or how his groans and grunts would fill the bathroom as he fucked roughly into Dream.

Dream moaned sluttishly at the thought, using his left arm to support himself on the wall of the shower, his grunts and groans filling his bathroom as he got closer and closer to becoming undone.

He leaned his head against the shower wall, thinking about how it would feel to hold his small hand, how those hands would feel wrapped shyly around the base of his cock, and then how they would feel, pumping him through climax-

Dream's mouth opened in an 'o' as he came, painting the grey tile he was leaning on white as his legs shook, and the orgasm shook him to his very core.

This was the most intense orgasm he had ever had, Dream thought as he started cleaning up. He couldn't just leave his mess here, after all.

But then the guilt came crashing down on him like it always did at times like these. Dream zoned out, staring at nothing and nothing staring back as he tried not to think about how he just rubbed one out to the thought of his best friend.

As the bathroom filled with steam, Dream found it harder to breathe. He had lost track of time, and the water was hot enough to make his skin tingle.

Dream knew he was fucked when he first had the urge to cough, but by then it was too late. By the time he had turned off the water and opened the bathroom door to let fresh air filter in, he was hunched over the toilet, hacking and coughing.

Petal after petal came up his throat. It had been a while since his last episode, and this hellish disease was snapping back with a vengeance.

He felt tears leak from his eyes because of the burning in his throat, and as much as he tried to literally change his mind, all he could think about was George.

George, rubbing his back as he coughed up a scene from hell.

George, laughing with him at Sapnap's shenanigans.

George, eating breakfast with him and complimenting Bad's cooking.

George, kissing him on the cheek after he bought a present for him.

George. George. George.

The water was a deep red when he finally got the chance to catch his breath, his thoughts of the sweet things he could do with the one he loved being his own downfall.

Dream rested his forehead on the clean seat of the toilet, breathing heavily, his body crumpled.

He needed a second to breathe.

Dream had decided today was a sweater day, throwing on a pair of basketball shorts and his green sweater; his own merch, dinky smile and all.

He felt himself sighing as he put a copper teapot on the stovetop, enough water in it for a cup of coffee in his own French press.

Dream didn't know who had brought the teapot, but if he had to guess, it'd be Sapnap. The boy loved coffee, and he was the whole reason Dream and Bad grabbed three different flavors of creamer from the store the other day.

Dream yawned as he poured the scalding hot water into the press, along with his favorite coffee, Death Wish. It was the world's most caffeinated coffee, and Sam had bought him a bag of it as a gag gift, but Dream had really taken a liking to it.

Dream pressed it, pouring the nectar of the gods into his own mug, which was a fan-made one with his little blob boi printed on it.

He dumped in a couple of packets of Splenda, stirring it and taking a sip, humming in satisfaction. It was just barely hot enough to burn, but in a good way, the way that woke him up enough to take the next sip.

He nearly melted into the couch as he sat down, grabbing the remote to turn on the TV. Today was just one of those days that he didn't feel like doing anything at all, other than watching Netflix, listening to music, and reading.

And he smiled a bit as he started playing a movie he hadn't seen yet, 'A Whisker Away'.

Dream would be lying if he said he hadn't gotten emotional at least once during the one hour and a forty four-minute duration of the film.

Now, he wouldn't go as far as to say he had cried, but he definitely wanted to punch the antagonist in his sadly adorable booper snoot at least twice. And he's not usually a violent person.

Unless it was Minecraft Manhunt. That is a completely different story.

He smiled to himself as he read the notification that Bad was streaming, and when he checked without a face cam. He got an idea, his smile widening further.

Dream grabbed a muffin off of the counter, one of the ones he made yesterday. He climbed up the stairs, being as quiet as possible. He snuck to Bad's room, opening the door quietly. Bad's setup was on the opposite side of the room, parallel to the door.

He closed the door softly behind him, sneaking over to Bad. He was wearing a headset and talking to Stream enthusiastically.

Dream pulled his phone out, going on his alt twitch and donating ten dollars to tell Bad to look behind him. Bad didn't hear it, but the chat spammed it after the donation, and eventually, he saw.

"What? Guys, my camera isn't even on, what do you mean 'look behind you'?" And then he turned, and let out an ear-piercing scream. He barely remembered to mute his mic before he chewed Dream out, wide-eyed and clutching the part of his shirt above his heart.

"DREAM, OH MY GOD-" Bad yelled, before Sapnap burst into the door, an unplugged lamp in his hands.

"WHAT HAPPE- Dream, I swear to fuck," Sapnap said, taking deep breaths, just as scared as Bad was.

Dream couldn't stop wheezing, and he was lucky he had already had an episode, or else this definitely would've triggered one.

He laughed as he handed the muffin to bad, which he snatched, saying something along the lines of 'you better freaking give me a muffin after that', which only made Dream wheeze again.

He loved these people, and if he wasn't already dying, he would definitely give his life for them.

Second chapter of the day.

C Chapter Eighteen | Laid Back

Chapter Notes

#CLEAN VERSION#

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He thought of the boy's smile, his lips... He thought about how his laugh sounded over the phone, peaceful and serene, and then he thought about how it would feel to have him whisper in his ear after a long day streaming...

He leaned his head against the shower wall, thinking about how it would feel to hold his small hand, how those hands would feel...

As the bathroom filled with steam, Dream found it harder to breathe. He had lost track of time, and the water was hot enough to make his skin tingle.

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Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Nineteen | Tea

Bad was always someone who easily forgave, and this horrifying scare was no exception. The muffin helped ease him along the already short path to forgiving the green menace.

Bad un-muted his mic, telling the chat that it was just a prank and that he had screamed to scare them. Some people didn't believe him, because the scream sounded (and was) genuine.

Dream made a note that there were some intellectuals in Bad's fanbase, even if the number was small.

(He'd use that to roast the boy if it ever came to that.)

Dream realized he was hungry as he went downstairs, grabbing the coffee he had left on the counter next to the muffins and chugging it before grabbing a muffin of his own, chowing down on his 'breakfast', even though it was tiny.

He poured himself a small glass of milk to go with it, drinking it when his teeth felt a bit stuck.

The feeling of his teeth getting stuck reminded him of the last time he had boba tea, which was more than a month ago. He had bitten into the boba with his top and bottom teeth, and any time he had opened his mouth, it had made a little suction popping noise.

Absentmindedly, he scrolled through his Google maps, searching for any tea places near him. There was one, it was called 'Tea House', and Dream decided to check the reviews, seeing they were pretty good.

He pulled up his messaging app as he leaned against the counter, opening the 'Dream House' group chat, which they would add George to eventually.

Dream

What do you guys want from a boba tea place?

Darryl

Hmmm... just check if they have any caramel flavored things please!!

Nick

Ur leaving the house? Count me out. Uhhhh... Matcha green tea with boba ig

Dream

Mkay. Peace out.

Dream turned off his phone, sticking it in the pocket of his shorts before grabbing his keys and going out the front door, locking it behind him. He got into his car, starting it, and setting up a playlist for the ten-minute drive as he buckled up and put it in reverse.

He hummed along to his music, which was relatively calm, similar to the drive. The only moment worth noting is when someone cut him off before he could turn, making him groan and take a u-turn to get into the right entrance.

He pulled into the parking lot, pulling on his mask and parking his car, climbing out. He pulled his sleeves up to his elbows, but also put his hood up. His hair was a mess today.

He got into the place, surprised to see some pretty modern furniture, and a bit of a line. Just two people in front of him.

He sat at one of the tables, and as he was scrolling through Twitter, he didn't expect to get interrupted, but fate decided differently.

"Hey, is that Dream's merch?" A boy who seemed to be in his early teens asked, an eyebrow raised in curiosity.

"Huh?" Dream said, before coughing and making his voice sound a bit higher-pitched than it was to avoid being recognized, even if he was probably just being paranoid.

"Yeah, it is. Why? You a fan?" The boy's eyes widened a bit, and Dream felt his heart drop.

"Dream...?" He asked, and Dream averted his eyes, at a loss for how to get out of this situation. Then their father noticed that their teenage son was talking to a grown man, grabbing their arm and pulling him away from Dream, to his relief.

"Come on, Sarah." Dream blinked. Who the hell names a boy Sarah- oh. Oh shit. Dream's face twisted in distaste.

"Sorry sir, your *son* just recognized me from YouTube." Dream said, any last bit of mystery surrounding his identity completely erased.

"So it is you!" The boy said, and Dream smiled a bit, putting on his YouTube persona, a more confident version of himself.

"Yup, but don't tell anyone. What's your name?" Dream asked, crouching a little bit to talk to the boy. Their father was fuming, but at least they knew when their son was too happy to be interrupted.

The *obvious* boy, or some other gender, but definitely not a '*Sarah*', hesitated a bit with their name.

"Uh, I'm Colin, but call me Sarah." He said, and Dream smiled.

"Sure, Sarah. It was really awesome to meet you, but I'm sure you and your Dad should be going." Dream said, standing back up and nodding to their father, a passive-aggressive smile on his face, even if the guy couldn't see it.

"Mkay. I'll DM you on Twitter, check for me!" Colin yelled back as they left, and if Dream was being honest with himself, he probably would check his ocean of DMs later for the boy.

Dream went up to the counter, smiling a bit as he asked about the other two streamers' orders,

happy to hear they could both get what they wanted. Then he ordered his own drink; A Rosehip Milk Tea with Boba and Strawberry jelly cubes.

He paid and tipped, sipping his own tea as he put the cardboard carrying case in his passenger seat, sitting in the driver's seat, and scrolling through Twitter for a little while.

George had tweeted about Dream's absence, trying to clear people's minds a bit by offering a bit of an explanation, even if it was only half of the truth.

G - Dream is just in a tough mental spot right now, so we should all support him when he needs time off like this break he's taking. Appreciate all of your support

Dream read through the replies, and there were a whole lot of people coming up with theories, though as you can expect, none of them were remotely near accurate.

Dream sighed, turning off his phone and just leaning his head against the head rest of his seat for a moment.

Some people were selfish and crude, and used everything he posted or said to start drama or try to start drama.

But others... Others seemed to actually care about him. Like, really truly care about him. And for that? He was glad.

A smile was on his face as he pulled out of the parking lot and hinally started to head to his *home*.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty | Movie Night

Dream had to stick his phone in his pocket so he could lock his car and unlock the front door, pushing it open with his foot and hanging his keys at the key rack next to the entrance.

"COME GET IT!" Dream yelled up the stairs, putting their drinks on the counter and throwing the cardboard case in the recycling.

Sapnap was the first one down, and he was happy to get his drink, sipping on it as he looked at Dream.

"I don't know what it is, but you look happier than you did when you left." Sapnap said, his head tilting a bit in curiosity.

"Oh, I just met someone, that's all." Dream explained, sipping his tea, and Sapnap latched onto the idea of him 'meeting someone' with an iron fist.

"Ooh?? Who's the lucky lady?" Dream punched his shoulder from across the counter, making the other boy laugh.

"Ow, don't do that so hard- I'm still sore from the last time.." He said, rubbing the spot. Dream huffed at him angrily.

"It was a fan. They... Recognized my voice. Their name is Colin." He said, smiling a bit. But then he glared at Sapnap as he smirked.

"And they're a teenage boy, so don't even." Dream said, and Sapnap put up his hands in an 'I surrender' type of way.

"Even if it was someone he might like, you shouldn't bother him about it, Nick. Just leave him alone." Bad said, grabbing the drink he assumed was his and sipping on it, his eyes lighting up.

"It's a caramel milk tea. I didn't even know it was a thing, but here we are." Dream explained, motioning with his hands and a shrug as he sipped his own tea again.

"Anyways, guys, I was thinking we could do a movie night thing. I've been wanting to try my hand at making caramel corn." Dream offered, and Sapnap perked up at the word 'Movie', Bad perking up at the word 'Caramel'.

"Sure! I can help you make it!" Bad said, his smile sweeter than the drink in his hands. Dream smiled back.

"Sure, why not?" Sapnap said, expression perking up. He stood up from his place at the bar, which was also their kitchen island.

"But I'm not helping make anything." Sapnap said, squinting at them in a way that said 'and you can't convince me otherwise'.

Bad waved him off, chattering happily with Dream about how they were going to make the best caramel corn ever.

And Dream believed him.

This was literally the best caramel corn ever.

Dream took another piece, the caramel still slightly gooey and warm as he savored it, Bad finally giving up on his lecturing about letting it cool first.

They both melted a little bit as they ate a couple more pieces before shoving it into the fridge.

The three of them had unanimously decided that watching a movie wasn't worth it unless it was dark so that the light of the windows wouldn't glare on the TV.

Dream had two hours to burn. So he did the first logical thing that came to mind.

He went into his room, booting up his PC and starting a stream.

"NonononoNO-" Dream yelled before the Death screen was displayed, and he took a deep breath, sighing.

He had died from a mixture of burning and starvation in the nether, trying to get blaze rods.

"Don't worry Dream, you'll get it next time." Someone who donated sent and Dream watched the F's roll into his live chat.

This was probably his thirtieth attempt at speedrunning 1.16 Minecraft, and the two hours had flown by in a snap.

"Sorry guys, but there isn't gonna be a next time today. Happy to say that I'm back in business, but expect my uploading schedule to be a bit slower. Anyways, love you guys, thanks for all the donos and I'll see you all next time!"

Dream ended the stream, sighing as he closed twitch and Minecraft, shutting down his PC. Bad had been messaging him about getting started on their movie night, and Dream just so happened to 'forget' to bring food into the nether.

He smiled as he went downstairs, seeing Sapnap and Bad setting up the movie. They had rented the new Joker movie after Dream had admitted that he hadn't seen it, My Spy, and Invisible Man.

Dream would be lying if he said he wasn't looking forward to the near five hours they would be spending together. Dream turned down the thermostat just a bit and grabbed a super fluffy blanket, large enough for the three of them.

He was able to snag an arm spot on the couch, and Bad had the other one, which left Sapnap with the middle spot. He seemed content with laying on Bad's lap and sticking his nasty ass freezing cold feet under Dream's hoodie, making him screech in alarm and disgust.

Eventually, they started the first movie, the Invisible Man. During the span of it, Sapnap figured out that Dream was naturally hot-blooded, and forced him to switch spots with him so he could

have the warmth from where he was sitting. Dream rolled his eyes, getting comfortable again.

Then during the next one, Joker, Dream laughed so hard he almost choked. Later, near the end, both Bad and Sapnap cuddled up to him because he was warm, Sapnap literally checking to see if they all had socks on before he did.

And during the last movie, My Spy, Bad fell asleep, and Sapnap followed suit, and Dream realized that the cat law also applied to humans.

You can't move if one falls asleep on you. If you do, it's a federal offense.

Dream smiled at the two, Sapnap snoring loudly and Bad's hands twitching occasionally. Dream wrapped his arms around the two, causing them to snuggle up further into him. He didn't really mind.

He hummed a tune as he thought about life, and the sky, and everything else on his mind, but as always, it always came back to him.

It would always come back to George, because he was his entire being, and Dream had a feeling he always would be.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty One | Flight

Dream groaned, cracking his back as he sat up, the sound low key terrifying with how loud it was.

He had woken up on the couch alone with the smell of eggs and bacon in the air, and Dream already knew from that one thing that Bad was the first awake.

He winced as his head and shoulders throbbed from the strange sleeping position, and he was relieved to remember that they kept their medicine cabinet downstairs.

He stood up, Bad cutting his own enthusiastic 'good morning!' off halfway through when he saw Dream's expression, instead glancing at him sympathetically before he flipped some bacon.

Dream took some Advil, rubbing his temples a bit as he leaned against the counter, teeth clenched.

"Headache?" Bad asked quietly. Dream nodded, and he didn't notice Bad pouring anything until a cup of warm chamomile tea was placed into his hands.

He looked up at Bad like he was his saving grace, and the boy just smiled at him. Dream had the sudden urge to cry, but he decided to push it away as he sipped his tea silently, headache so bad he wouldn't wish it upon anyone.

George's head was absolutely killing him.

He whined silently as his head throbbed. The painkillers had worn off two hours into this nine-hour flight. George didn't bring any onto the plane with him, and he felt like this headache would probably torture him the whole way through. An hour has passed since the Advil wore off, and George was suffering.

So now, his head hurt, his body ached from sitting still, and he was hungry, Because he didn't eat lunch before he left to catch his plane.

George had boarded at noon in his time, which was six am in Dreams time. He had eaten breakfast but didn't think about how hungry he'd be on the plane, and he still had six hours left to feel sorry for himself.

In his time, he would have gotten to the Dream House by nine PM, but that would be just three PM in Dreams time.

So while he was used to staying up until five AM, that meant he would be sleeping at a normal human time, aka eleven PM. It's like manually fixing your sleep schedule.

George smiled to himself through the pain, thinking about how he would almost one hundred percent be sleeping before the other tenants of the Dream House.

But that smile faded away as he remembered he would still be waiting for his things to come, which was rescheduled to happen a week from now.

George wondered where he would be sleeping. Probably a couch if no one brought an air mattress. Or, even better, he could steal one of the other boy's beds.

He thought about the multiple times in Minecraft Manhunt when Dream broke his bed, grinning at the thought of getting revenge from him.

He looked out the window, his mind wandering far from where he was. He didn't realize he was drifting into sleep until he was passed out, snoring softly.

Someone was poking him. George slowly sat up, remembering that he was on a plane as he did, and his stomach growled excessively loud.

"Are you George Not Found??" Someone asked. He tiredly looked around before his eyes met with a kid who looked to be around ten.

"Yes..?" He half told half asked, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes so he could actually greet a fan the right way.

"That's so awesome! I'm Alex!" The boy said, grinning, and George thought he was a little young to have braces.

"Nice to meet you, Alex," George said, smiling and offering a hand to shake. He recognized the boy as one of the kids from the front of the plane, and he had apparently decided to take advantage of the empty seat next to George.

He realized that his face mask had slipped off in his sleep and he pulled it up again, his cheeks tinting pink.

Alex shook his hand, ecstatic to be meeting a streamer. George was pleasantly surprised too, happy to meet a fan.

"Are you going to visit Sapnap!?" Alex asked, apparently connecting the dots that George was going to Texas, where Sapnap lived.

"Yeah, I guess you could say that. Are you going to see anyone?" He asked, and the boy's expression got a bit sad.

"My granny passed away. I'm going to her funeral, and I'm gonna stay with my grandad for a little while." He said, and George gave him an 'Im sorry for your loss' and rubbed circles on his back for an awkward moment.

"I have a question." Alex suddenly asked the other male, curiosity painted on his expression.

"Hm? What is it?" George asked, his own curiosity piqued by the freckled boy.

"Does Dream act differently outside of social media? I've heard some streamers do." He asked, and George had to think about that.

He thought about all the times Dream begged him to stay and chat after a stream or a video.

He thought about the times when Dream was sleepy or sleep-deprived and he confessed that he wanted to know what it was like to hug George.

He thought about the few times Dream had called him, panicking because of some small problem, George being the first person he thought to call.

"Yeah. He's nicer outside of videos, more chill." He answered honestly, a smile spreading across his face.

Alex gave him a knowing look, which confused the hell out of George because he didn't know what it was he said to get a look like that from a fan.

"Sounds cool, thanks for letting me know. Also, can I get a selfie?" He said, and George, without thinking too hard about it, said yes, posing with the boy.

George climbed out of the Uber, his bones cracking loudly, and he groaned a bit before his jaw dropped.

The place was huge. He grinned as he pulled his suitcase out of the car, tipping the driver and rolling up to the door happily.

He rang the doorbell and waited for a moment.

A dirty blonde man with a bright smile opened the door, towering over George and laughing at something, wearing Dream's merch, and George finally connected the dots when his expressive, yellowish eyes met his own.

Clay's eyes widened, and George's did too, and then the cup in Clay's hand slipped out of his hold.

The sound of shattering porcelain filled the silence.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Two | Weeping

Chapter TW, crying

TW, panic attack

Dream was frozen, and he had forgotten how to breathe. His face was turning slightly pink as he gasped, and tears came to his eyes, the type that came when you were frustrated and burned on their way out.

And then, like a coward, he ran upstairs, and into his room, shutting and locking the door behind him. As sobs wracked his body, he put music on blast, drowning out his sudden panic.

The world was out of focus, and it was just his head, but instead of his own voice echoing endlessly, it was George's voice like a broken record, telling him horrible things.

Everything was too loud, too much, he had to fight for each breath with everything he had, every step a battle as he made his way to the toilet.

He felt like he was freezing, his arms gaining goosebumps as he leaned over the toilet, another episode starting up.

George's voice rang around in his head, endless and forever echoing.

He coughed violently, and he just wanted it all to stop. He wanted everything to just stop, to go away and stay away.

When it was his voice telling him he didn't deserve to live, Dream could handle it, even ignore it.

But when it was George's...

TW, self-harm

Dream's mind didn't register as he reached for his razor, the only sharp object near him.

It didn't click in his head as he reached for his hoodie, pulling it up and holding it between his blood-stained teeth.

It finally hit him, what he was doing, as he felt the pain of slashing his razor across his skin in the opposite way than was advised.

And then he dropped the razor like it had burned him, curling in on himself and pulling his hair, rocking back and forth slowly.

He just wanted it all to stop.

Panic Attack and Self Harm TW over

George was struck dumb as he watched Dream, watched the tears flow down his cheeks, watched the boy run away from him.

He was frozen, eyes blown open wide as he stared at nothing, just the staircase, flinching at the slamming of a door, and shoulders slouching as he heard music being played loudly.

George almost wanted to cry. What did he ever do to make Dream react like that? Bad looked just as shocked as him until he saw George, smiling sadly.

The first tear slipped down his cheek, and Bad seemed to tear up with him as George wiped at his cheek, only for another to follow, then another, and eventually tears were flowing like rain down his face.

Bad went up to George and wrapped his arms around him, who was too shocked to move for a moment before his breath hitched, and he wrapped his arms around the other boy, balling his shirt in his hands as he held on for dear life, beginning to sob.

It was an hour later when Dream came downstairs, new jacket on and hair wet, eyes red and puffy.

The very first thing he saw was George. He was curled up on the couch staring at him, his pretty face flushed pink and cheeks stained with tear tracks, and Dream knew exactly what to do.

He went over to him and opened his arms shakily for the boy. George didn't have any other emotion on his face except sadness, and he stood up slowly, just staring at Dream for a moment before he fell into his arms, starting to weep again as Dream held back his own tears, rubbing circles onto his back while the boy's shoulders shook softly.

"I'm sorry, George." Dream whispered. He's sorry for loving him, he's sorry for being himself, he's sorry for being such a horrible friend, he's sorry for reacting the way he did, he's sorry, he's sorry, he's sorry.

George just shook his head frantically, pulling away from where he was buried in Dream's chest, to make eye contact with the taller boy.

Dream teared up at the sight of the boy's brown eyes red from crying, and Dream wanted to wipe the tears off his cheeks, to hold him close and stay that way forever.

"I'm sorry for n-not telling you I was c-coming." George sniffled, voice breaking a bit, and as he said that, a tear slid down Dream's face, and he swore to himself he would never, ever be the one to make George cry. Never again.

He pulled the boy back into the embrace, crying silently as he held the other boy close.

George was in the bathroom, Dream having led him there so he could clean himself off and splash some cold water on his face.

George looked in the mirror at his gross, tear track covered face, splashing some water onto it and just breathing until he almost looked normal again.

Dream had apologized more than once, and George had too, but George still felt uneasy. He never wanted to hurt Dream like that. The whole reason he came early was to make him happy, not upset.

And here he was, breathing deeply in a bathroom with his best friend waiting just outside for him because he was crying like a baby.

He rubbed his eyes and came back out, only for Dream to offer him his own jacket, probably one he had fished out of George's suitcase.

George wished that he had given him the one he was wearing. Dream was so warm...

He let himself be seated at the barstool after he pulled on his own hoodie, watching as Dream walked back and forth across the kitchen like he had done it a million times before.

He was cute. George couldn't deny the truth, it was obvious that his best friend got girls, with how his jaw was sharp and his hair was just long enough to feel good if you ran your fingers through it.

George didn't like it when Dream's eyes were discolored from crying. He vowed never to be the reason he cried again.

And as he and Dream settled onto the couch to watch TV, mugs of chamomile tea in their hands, he knew.

Dream was the best thing to ever happen to him.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Three | Together

It took about an hour to completely dispel the tension between Dream and George.

Dream took a glance at George's expression, no longer flushed, not even sad. He was smiling softly, that smile widening as he laughed at one of the jokes on TV. George started to turn towards Dream, and he quickly snapped to look at the television, a blush rising to his face.

George didn't seem to notice, or at least Dream didn't think he did.

Eventually, George rested his head on Dream's shoulder, and Dream nearly flinched in surprise, but he was able to suppress it into a twitch of his leg.

Dream was stiff as he looked down at the smaller boy, who was just focused on the TV. He wanted to run his fingers through his short hair and play with it while the other boy fell asleep.

He blushed more, looking away and just trying to focus on the show.

When George felt himself stir a little in his sleep, he realized how comfortable he was. He was somewhere warm, and he moved to bury his cheek further into comfort.

He felt something shift for a moment, but he was too happy to care as he felt a rhythmic bobbing.

His bliss turned to upset when the warmth was gently pulled away from him, and he made a sound of protest, reaching out.

A couple of seconds later, something that was warm and smelled good was placed into his hands, and George was quick to curl up with it, shivering as something soft was pulled over him. Soon, he fell into a deeper sleep.

Dream blushed as he watched George in his bed, cuddling the familiar 'big brain' merch that Dream had released a while back.

He huffed. The world was out to kill him, with his crush being so adorable. First, George leans on his shoulder, then he falls asleep and literally cuddles up to him. Dream had picked him up gently to bring him upstairs and give him an actual bed to sleep in, and then the boy had literally reached out to him when he was about to leave, looking like he was gonna cry.

And so Dream had taken off his sweatshirt and given it to him, not knowing if he could handle sleeping in the same room as the boy, let alone sleeping in the same bed.

He started to reach out to caress the boy's face, before he pulled his hand away, ashamed of

himself.

He went back into the hallway, going to the cabinet with all the extra blankets and pillows. His floor was carpeted, but he still wanted to grab two puffy blankets to lay on, three pillows, and a normal blanket. Good thing he had brought a lot of extra sheets and things for any guests who might come, even though he didn't expect to be using them so soon.

He set everything up next to his bed, face still very red as he did so, trying not to think about how George was literally right there, less than three feet away from him.

He hummed, looking at the nest before he finally decided it looked good, looking back at George for a moment.

The boy was cute, curled up with his jacket and snoring adorably, and Dream smiled.

He puffed up his chest, going over to the boy and planting a light kiss on his forehead before settling down so he could sleep.

When the sun came up, the first thing Dream noticed was that he was very, very itchy. He sat up, trying to reach around to his back to scratch the mosquito bites there.

The second was that he wasn't alone.

"Good morning!" A voice said from his left, and Dream's head whipped around so fast it cracked. Dream hissed a little at the pain, and George absolutely cackled.

"Rude... And after I carried you up those stairs like you were my kid or something.." Dream grumbled, and George hit him with a pillow, which brought the grin back to Dream's expression.

"That's on you. You could've left me on the couch you kn-" Before he held back a laugh. Dream was confused.

"What? Is there something on my face?" George burst out laughing, and Dream stood up, going to his hanging mirror, and then he shook his head and smiled.

His bed head was absolutely terrible this morning.

"You should've seen two days ago, I had chlorine in my hair and it was literally everywhere at once." George laughed harder for a solid minute before he was gasping for breath.

"Your hair.. looks amazing," George said between huffs, his face flushed. He was clutching his chest, and Dream was surprised to see him wearing his sweatshirt. His face went red, and George looked confused before he looked down at himself and turned pink, looking away.

"It's big, soft, and comfy, okay?" And Dream managed to scoop up enough of his broken pride to say...

"Whatever you say, sweetheart." Before smirking as George hit him hard with a pillow, which Dream caught.

"C'mon, let's get breakfast. I was thinking of going to Ihop today with the boys." Dream said as he went into his closet to change clothes.

George seemed a bit flushed when he came out, and Dream was confused, but George didn't offer any explanation why.

"Well, Bad and Sapnap are streaming together, so we can't really take them with us." Dream shrugged, sending a message and asking what they wanted.

His outfit today was normal black skinny jeans and a grey and blue sweater, simple and easy. The sweater was a bit big on him, threatening to hang off of one of his shoulders. In that way, he and George sort of matched.

"Well, what are we waiting for?" Dream asked, and George shrugged, a smile plastered on his face.

"Let's get going on our date." Dream walked to the door, winking at George before dodging a pillow that was hurtling at him, laughter in the air.

Today was going to be nice.

Chapter Twenty Four | Really

Dream and George had fought a little over the aux cord, and Dream pretended to be frustrated when the other boy 'won', but in actuality, his heart was fluttering at the other boy's happy expression.

Dream got out of the car first, taking advantage of the fact that George had to fiddle with the cord for a hot minute before he could get out. He quickly went around to the other side, pulling open the other boy's door, bowing playfully.

"M'lord?" Dream said and then tensed, preparing for a smack or something, but instead of that, he got to hear George's giggle. It was like liquid gold on his senses.

Dream felt his shoulders go slack, and a loving smile moves onto his expression. He felt the heat rise to his cheeks and his stomach twist in the best kind of way. He felt his fingers itching to hold the shorter boy's hand, but he didn't dare act on the instinct.

They walked into the breakfast restaurant, not too surprised to see a dwindling amount of people there. Dream didn't realize that his mask wasn't up until George nudged him with his elbow. Dream was quick to fumble with it and get it right after that.

And, even though Dream should be over this, he'd be lying if he said wearing the facemask in front of George didn't make him feel more comfortable. A part of him still wanted to shy away from the boy, a deeply rooted fear of not being good enough trying to drive him away.

But it was his insatiable hunger for the boy's presence that drew him back in again, like the tide.

It had been about seven minutes; Dream been nervous, checking his watch, his leg bouncing.

Finally, a nice seeming waiter called them up to get seated at a table, and Dream almost sighed in relief when he saw they were put in a corner spot, less surrounded.

George sat on one side, Dream sat across from him, and he didn't realize how much he was twitching and zoning out.

"So, what are you going to get?" George asks. They had been sitting down for a bit, and Dream had been too lost in thought to be reading the menu. Dream took a break in the action of gnawing on his lip to answer.

"I'm just going to get their basic four stacks of pancakes." He answered, and then when he looked up, he realized that something was off in George's expression as he stared into his eyes.

"Something wrong?" Dream asked, and George seemed to wilt a little, to his confusion.

"It's... Nothing, I guess. Just overthinking." George averted his eyes, and Dream watched him fiddle with the sleeve of the sweatshirt.

Dream smiled warmly. That's right, George was wearing his clothes. He looked absolutely adorable in them.

"You look good today." George complimented, and Dream, for a hot second, thought he had said his thoughts out loud. His face flushed a bit when he realized George had said it, not him.

"Oh.. Uh, thanks. You don't look too bad yourself. My clothes suit you." Dream said and almost

wanted to slap himself until he realized that George was smiling and holding back a giggle, which made Dream himself snort.

Dream's snort sent George into a giggle fit, and Dream joined in, his smile wide and impossible to miss.

After some happy banter, they finally saw their waiter. He was a lanky yet handsome boy with tan skin, curly black hair, and a slouch. He smiled smoothly at them.

"I'm Chris, and I'll have the pleasure of waiting on you today. What would you like me to get you?" Dream and George were both still in a good mood as they told him their orders.

Then Dream got an idea. He smirked, and George's face seemed to pale at his expression, and for a moment, Dream wondered if the boy thought he was intimidating.

"Excuse me, Chris?" Dream said, interrupting the boy as he was about to walk away. The boy turned to him, a confused look on his face.

"I'll pay a good ten dollars extra specifically for as much whipped cream as humanly possible on those pancakes." George groaned out a 'Dream come oooooon'.

"Sure, sir," Chris said, sharing a devilish look with Dream before striding away, more confident than before.

Dream laid back in his seat, arms above his head, legs propped up comfortably.

"Now we wait."

"Holy shit." George and Dream spoke in sync as the plate of pancakes was placed in front of the taller of the two.

If you were to say there was a lot, then you would be wrong. Dream honestly wasn't sure if Shitton was accurate either.

Oh. He knew the word. It was a fuckton.

The pancakes were completely covered, and while there was a sizable height in just pancakes, about an inch, that size was quadrupled just from the Whipped Cream.

He looked up at Chris like he was a god. Chris looked down at him, eyes shining. Dream offered a fist to bump, and bump they did. George laughed a bit. He was still in disbelief of this absolute monstrosity of breakfast, if you could even call it that.

Dream first went in with a spoon, eating spoonful after spoonful of canned, whipped goodness. Each spoonful tasted worse than the last, but Dream could barely bring himself to care.

Once he had eaten enough whipped cream, he started chipping away at the pancake. His appetite was bottomless at the moment. He'd be damned if he didn't finish these pancakes.

He eventually did finish, and he burped loudly. He looked up and almost burst out laughing at the

disgusted, yet impressed look that George had on his face.

George was bewildered. Shocked silent. Struck dumb.

Dream had just completely pigged out on pancakes. Normally, no one can ever look attractive doing that. No one.

But Dream somehow managed to look not attractive, but absolutely mind shatteringly hot while doing it.

And as the other boy's face slightly changed color, Dream dabbing his face with a paper towel, George felt his heart squeeze a bit.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Five | Ice Cream

George didn't know what to do.

After breakfast, which was *amazing* by the way, he and Dream climbed back into his car, and he honestly thought his heart was beating two times as fast or something. Eventually, it was easier to ignore.

After about two minutes on the road, George realized that they were not heading towards the house, but instead the opposite direction. He had a moment of happiness at the fact that he and Dream were actually going to hang out longer, but it was laced with confusion.

"Dream? Where are you taking us?" George asked, turning away from where he had previously been looking out the window of the steadily moving car.

Speaking of the car, Dream's was nice. It wasn't over the top or anything, more... Expensive enough to be extremely comfortable.

Dream probably didn't eat in this car; It was missing the familiar smell of fried food like the car George used to have. George used to rent a vehicle, but there are certain rules when you leave the country, and he ended up having to stop renting it, annoyingly.

"We're going to get Ice Cream." Dream stated. George felt a grin spread across his face at the thought of creamy candy floss flavored goodness.

It took all of Dream's willpower to keep his eyes on the road instead of George's happy smile. He ended up sneaking a few glances anyway.

Dream was focused on the road when the light rain started, and George seemed pleasantly surprised by it. Dream was indifferent.

The rain was nice. It gave a rhythmic array of tapping that arguably made George want to hum to it, and Dream wanted to record it so he could listen to it later, while he was trying to sleep.

It had picked up little by little and by the time they got to the ice cream shop, a place called cold stone creamery, George and Dream were at the threat of getting soaked. Dream felt his heart flutter and his stomach kick as he ran laughing with George to the door, trying not to get completely drenched.

Dream pushed the door open for George, who pouted in return, making the taller male laugh a little bit.

They walked up to the counter, with two employees on hand, and asked for their flavors. George couldn't tell the flavors by colors, so he leaned up to ask Dream about his.

"Do they have Candy Floss flavor?" Dream looked down at him, George hated the fact that he was taller, confusion painted on his expression.

Then he seemed to realize something. Dream chuckled, leaning down a bit to talk to the smaller male.

"In the US, it's called cotton candy. It's right here." He said, pointing. He looked like a happy teacher as he saw George's look of confusion change to understanding.

"Can I get two medium-sized cups, mine with a banana pudding flavor and his with cotton candy?" Dream asked, standing straight again to address the man at the counter. He smiled pleasantly as he got to work.

"When we get it, can I try yours?" George asked him, and Dream couldn't say no to him if he wanted to.

"It depends on how good it is." Dream said, his eyebrow quirked as the man asked about toppings. He asked for crushed nuts and vanilla wafers, and George asked for cake crumbles and dehydrated marshmallows.

They sat down near the wall of the small yet cozy ice cream parlor, both smiling as they took small bites of their sweet treats.

"So, can I try some? You can have some too." George asked, pushing his ice cream towards Dream. Dream grabbed two separate tasting spoons to try it and then throw away.

Dream and George's eyes lit up at almost the same time as they tried each other's sweet treats.

"This is super good!" George exclaimed, causing Dream's heart to melt a little bit, not unlike the ice cream as he leaned on his palm and watched the boy's happiness, a dreamy-eyed stare you could say.

"This isn't half bad." Dream said, and George just smiled at him, expression saying 'come on, you know that it's better than that'.

"Come on, you know it's awesome." Dream nearly choked from how spot on he was, playing it off as a laugh and wiping his face a little.

"I mean, I don't know if I'd buy it myself, but it's pretty good." Dream amended, sliding it back over to the boy while he did the same.

He continued to lap up his own banana-flavored goodness, making small talk with the prettiest boy he had ever seen, his smile never coming to a halt.

It was perfect.

They both eventually finished their ice cream, much to Dream's disappointment. He asked for the same flavors in two pints so he could eat them at home, and George seemed ecstatic as Dream placed the heavy bag in his hands.

He and Dream ran to the car again, the rain being light but still slightly annoying. Plus, in Texas, if you get wet, you stay wet.

"Thank you, Dream." George said, a shy smile on his face as they got back into the car, and Dream's surprised expression softened into something sweet.

"It's my treat, George." He said sincerely, his happiness warm in his chest as he saw the boy blush a bit as he nodded and avoided eye contact.

George was his treat. Dream loved being around him, and he loved watching him smile and laugh along with his jokes. He loved the way that he stammered when he was embarrassed. He loved the way his face flushed when he was angry. He loved the way his laughter soothed his soul.

He loved this boy with all his heart, and he'd be damned if he never got to say it before he died.

But today isn't the day.

Dream started the car, the rumble of the engine and the patter of the rain uniting into a natural beat that accompanied his heart's.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Six | Discovery

On the way home, about halfway there, Dream had the urge to cough. For a split second, he let himself cough, forgetting that he had a literal deadly disease.

He cursed himself out as he tasted blood and tried hard not to let the uncontrollable urge distract him; To resist the disease that held him by the throat. But eventually, he had to give in. Dream pulled over to the side of the road as he kept coughing and hacking.

George was absolutely confused and concerned, he started rubbing circles on Dreams back until Dream shoved the boy away, eyes wide. He couldn't see him like this. He crawled out of the car and kept coughing up petals and blood, hoping to high hell that George wasn't looking, George couldn't see.

Dream was absurdly grateful that this episode was short, about five minutes, and Dream used his spit to clean off most if not all the blood, climbing into the car, getting ready to lie his way out of another situation.

George was on his phone when Dream started coughing. It wasn't lung cancer coughing, but instead that sick kind of coughing, the type you get when your temperature his high enough to make you pass out.

George was worried beyond belief when Dream pulled over. This wasn't normal. There was no way...

The worried boy started to rub circles on the other boy's back, only to get shoved away, a glimpse of wild eyes and something that might be red- and then Dream was coughing on the side of the road.

It hurt too much for George to even think about watching it, and he just sat there, looking down at his lap and listening to the muffled sounds of the struggle someone feels when their own body is against them.

When Dream climbed back into the car, he saw George, quiet tears rolling down his cheeks, and George was shocked still when he was wrapped up in a hug.

"I'm sorry George. I didn't mean to shove you." Dream said, and George wrapped his arms around him, holding on like the man in his arms was going to disappear into thin air.

"Wh-What.," George said, and he didn't need to continue the question. Dream knew what he was going to ask.

"It's... a Disease. Something I was born with. It... I know it isn't pretty. I'm sorry you had to see that. I try to keep it hidden." Dream said, and only one sentence is a lie. He was proud of those odds.

"You have to tell the other two," George said, leaning away. He saw the discolored stain on the lower half of Dream's face and got choked up again.

He got some wipes that Dream kept in his glovebox, probably exactly for this reason, and with shaky hands, offered them to Dream, looking away from him. It was just too horrible to look at.

"Thanks..." Dream said and put down the sun blocker to use the mirror and clean his face until it was free of any lingering stains.

He threw the wipes in a bag he kept for non-food trash, moving his face into George's field of view.

"Better?" He said, using his hands to motion to his clean face. His lips were tinted a deeper yellow, but that was all that shows to George.

George seemed to shake, and his tears started up again as he fell into the other boy's arms, who just rubbed circles on his back for the fifteen minutes that the boy was crying, whispering sweet nothings in his ears.

When George's breathing finally slowed, he pulled away, hiccuping and wiping at his eyes.

"I'm sorry I didn't see it before..." George apologized, and Dream's eyes went wide as he shushed the boy.

"Nonono. I'm sorry I didn't tell you." He said, and George sighed. As much as he didn't want to, his gaze went to where Dream had coughed up blood.

His eyes were blown wide. That... That's a lot of blood... Dream must have coughed it up on a patch of flowers because there were petals coming through- but, there weren't any flower patches around-?

George felt someone grab his chin gently to turn his face away. His cheeks went hot as his eyes met Dream's yellowish ones, and Dream quickly turned away, his face changing color a bit, just like that one time on the couch.

Dream buckled up and George followed suit shakily, and he George couldn't help but start crying again as they got moving.

Dream had to tell the others.

It was two hours after they got home that Dream called them all downstairs, and George already knew why.

"So, guys... I bet you're wondering why I'm interrupting your evening." Dream said. Sapnap looked bored, and Bad looked worried.

"I'm here to tell you something that I didn't want you to know about me. I didn't want you.. to worry about me. But I have a hereditary disease."

Bad looked terrified, and Sapnap finally looked a bit worried. They both looked at George, and

George looked away as he sifted through the pantry for something that wasn't gluten-free to eat.

"I got a disease from my father called Cystic Fibrosis, and treatments for it can get very expensive. I take medication, but recently it hasn't been effective, and I need to go to a doctor to get my prescription updated." Sapnap and Bad's worry seemed to go down as he continued talking.

"This disease makes mucus fill the passageways in my lungs, and recently a symptom I've developed is... Hemoptysis." They all seemed confused, except George, who flinched a bit as he said it. He knows what it means.

"It's where I cough up blood." Bad gasped and Sapnap's eyes went wide.

"Wait, so, that time you went to the bathroom for ten minutes-"

"Yes."

"The stain by the pool...?"

"Yeah..."

"The time you ran away from George?"

George looked at Dream, waiting for his answer with surprise on his face. He had never thought about that.

"Well, that was... Yeah, that was part of the reason."

Suddenly, Dream was wrapped up in a hug from Bad, and Sapnap joined in. Soon, the four boys were in a group hug. Dream started tearing up.

"We're here for you, Dream. And we always will be."

And Dream's tears fell because unfortunately, that was the truth.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Seven | Everybody In

Both Dream and George were awkwardly chilling on Dream's bed. Dream still needed to soundproof his room, now that he thought about it.

Dream had invested in some pro acoustic panels about a year ago, and he had bought some more about a week before he had moved. Yes, they were expensive, but they were necessary.

In Dream's opinion, the audio was the most important thing in his YouTube videos. He had a good mic and an even more amazing setup with acoustic panels, and his voice was all people knew of him. So why would they stay if they couldn't hear him well?

George watched him set up the six light grey panels on the walls, using a leveler to make things even. George would never tell him, but watching his muscles flex made the smaller boy blush.

When everything was up, Dream asked George to go outside. George, confusedly, did so. George heard him say something, but it was extremely muffled, so he started to open the door, only to realize that Dream was screaming what he was saying.

George was shocked. That was some insane soundproofing.

"Dude, how much were these?" George asked, inspecting the panels. They were fabric, and most likely even cleanable.

"Each one was thirty dollars, so... I think around three hundred, since shipping costs a hot bit and I ordered twice separately. Got three more since my room is bigger."

George's eyes seemed to be huge with excitement. He was definitely going to buy some when he saved up. He thought about how he still had the money he was saving for a PC and mic, separate from his normal bank account.

If your wondering, yes, it was hell to set up an account in America. It was also hell to transfer all his money, and his savings.

"I think I might have enough for two or three of them." George muttered, pulling his phone out to check his savings account balance. Dream looked at him with a raised eyebrow.

"Hey! You literally bought me a PC and mic, which I was saving up for. I have some money because of you." George said, pointing at Dream like him having money to spend was his fault, and a bad thing.

Dream laughed a little, and George seemed frustrated before he gave in, laughing along with him.

"Hey, George?" George looked up at him with a 'hmm?'. Dream was smiling giddily, and George was confused.

"Want to go for a late-night swim?" Dream asked, and George's eyes lit up as he sat up quickly.

"Hell yeah, I do. We gonna invite the other-" And then he froze for a second before continuing. Dream was a bit curious but decided not to comment.

"We gonna invite the other two?" George asked, lapsing a little bit before asking about inviting them. Would Dream think it was weird that George wore a shirt in the pool...? It's not like he could

go without one.

George hoped Dream wouldn't care as he went to ask Sap and Bad if they wanted to swim, happy to find out that both of them weren't busy and didn't mind some late night swimming.

Dream felt a blush crawl up his cheeks as he told George he could change in the bathroom, he himself going to change in the closet.

It's funny, isn't it? In the closet as always.

Dream finally changed into the same swimwear he wore last time, the skintight swim tee showing off his muscles a bit. He felt confident as he strode back out, surprised to see that George was wearing a shirt too.

The other boy also seemed surprised, but then they both smiled and chuckled at one another, grabbing some towels from the linen closet downstairs.

While they were waiting outside, Dream putting their stuff on the glass table and George dipping his feet in the water, Sap and Bad came out, both a bit confused and happy.

Dream ran and jumped into the deep end, George screeching a bit from where he was sitting close by, getting splashed. Dream swam back up from the depth, grinning widely.

Bad was looking at him, concerned. Dream laughed as he pushed himself onto the bench part of the pool.

"You don't have to worry about me, this is nothing. You should only be worried if I'm breathing heavily or something." He said, laughing a bit. Bad seemed more at ease then, that is before Sapnap pushed him into the deep end.

Bad came up, spitting water out and glaring at Sapnap before they all burst out laughing together.

They swam to the shallow end until they all could stand, making the height difference painfully apparent.

"Haha, shorties." Dream said from the side of the pool he was in. They all played a game where they walked until the water was to their chins, just to see as a visual representation how different their heights were.

It was very, very obvious that Dream was the winner. Dream still ended up learning something new though, as George somehow managed to splash him from the distance between them.

Dream grinned, and everybody froze up in fear. This wasn't going to end well.

Dream swam through the water faster than the rest of them, unlike how it was in Minecraft. He caught up quickly and ended up splashing them all at least once before he calmed down, wheezing with laughter.

"Man, I love you guys." Dream said before he realized he had said it out loud, his eyes widening. It was the first time he told them he loved them in person.

"Aww, I love you too, Dream," Bad said, and Sapnap smiled, saying the same thing. Then they all looked at George, who was on the opposite end of the pool.

"You're wrong if you think I'm gonna say it," George said, an eyebrow raised and a finger pointed

at them.

Dream frowned, letting his acting take over, or at least that's what he told himself. More than half of his sadness was genuine.

"I'm not doing it today, okay?" George said, and looked away.

Because if he did, he was scared it would be true.

Second chapter of the day.

Chapter Twenty Eight | Cuddling

Dream took a shower first, and he just let the high water pressure beat down on his back for a moment.

Yesterday was awesome, but his hair was outrageously upset at him for the chlorine in the pool, and Dream knew he'd have to be careful with shampooing it and conditioning it to nurse it back to health.

His brushed his hair, slimy with conditioner, back on his head so it wasn't in his face as he relaxed and unwinded in the hot shower.

After awhile, about three hours, the four boys had gone back in to rest up, since two of them had started complaining about sore legs.

They had all bid each other goodnight, but since everyone had wordlessly decided that George was to stay in Dream's room, he and Dream were just talking.

After a little while, Dream felt sick from the chlorine smell, going to light some candles and take a shower.

So here he was, George waiting for him to get out so the shorter boy could get in. Dream slammed his head against the wall of the shower just enough to hurt, warding away any unsafe thoughts.

He couldn't be fantasizing when the boy he was thinking about was right next door.

Dream finally rinsed out his conditioner, drying his hair a bit before wrapping his towel around himself just high enough to cover the scar before picking up his discarded, Chlorine soaked swimwear and walked back in his room.

George looked up from where he was scrolling on his phone, and his face went beat red at the sight of dream in a towel. He scrambled to pick up his stuff and go to the bathroom. Dream watched in amusement. George was always so easy to fluster.

He went back to the closet, picking out a pair of booty shorts and a huge T-shirt to sleep in. Yes, you read this right. Dream just feels more comfortable wearing this stuff!

He was laying stomach down on his bed when he heard the door to the shower open, and Dream looked over his shoulder to see a fully dressed, red-in-the-face George.

George was wearing a black t-shirt and sweatpants, both grey. They hugged his curves, and Dream took a moment to appreciate the sight, smirking.

"Sup." Dream said, before going back to twitter, his ego flaring at the sight of George blushing because of him, just like it always does.

He felt the mattress sink next to him, and he turned, moving a bit, pretending not to notice that the back of his shirt was riding up to show some of his just got slightly tanned skin.

"Woah, dude, look at this fanart!" Dream said, showing his phone to George, who had been busy looking *somewhere else*. Dream felt his heart throb.

They both scrolled through twitter, liking good fanart and vibing in one another's presence.

That was, until George fell asleep. Dream looked at him and awwed in his mind, carefully taking his phone out of his hand and plugging it in, deciding he would stay up a little longer.

And so he did. He stayed up a whole ass hour later, and he had planned on staying up longer, but then something unexpected happened.

George, in his sleep, rolled over started hugging Dream, big spoon style. He had been on Dream's right side, and now he had his right arm around Dream's waist, and his right leg wrapped around Dream's left.

Dream knew he probably should, but he couldn't deny the urge to cuddle the smaller boy when he's the one who started it.

So, that being said, Dream carefully reached out to plug in his phone, George's arm tightening and him making a sound of distress until Dream laid back down with him, but this time, he was cradling George's face in his chest.

George seemed to love it, quickly snuggling into the warmth of the taller male with a satisfied hum. Dream choked down a sound of surprise as the boy's second arm slipped under him, to fully hug him.

Dream wasn't as shocked as George pushed his leg in-between his, but he didn't crave any more than the closeness they already had. This? This was good. Great, even.

Dream laced his fingers through George's hair for the first time. His hair wasn't rough, but more on the softer side. Not as soft as Dreams, though.

Dream just pet George's hair, watching as the boy smiled in his sleep at the sensation. George was probably only cuddling with him because it was warm, but Dream was living for it. He knew he would never forget this moment.

George's hand had snuck it's way under Dream's shirt, and now cold hands met warm skin, making Dream flinch a bit and let out a choked sound of surprise.

George still didn't seem satisfied with the position, though, and eventually George was snuggling so close to him that Dream was starting to get embarrassed.

It was then that Dream made a realization. George... George had curves, hot curves, and they never seemed this way before, but now they seemed a bit... Feminine.

Dream's eyes widened, and he experimentally pushed a bit against the other boy's chest. He couldn't tell earlier, because of the black shirt, but... George had boobs. George was trans.

Dream felt like crying tears of joy when he looked down at George, who trusts him enough to be around him without a binder on, and even subconsciously trusts him enough to cuddle.

He didn't want George to regret this in the morning.

As he placed his forehead against George's, this is the thought that flashed in Dream's mind. Dream didn't want George to feel uncomfortable in the morning, or nervous around Dream.

Dream grabbed his phone slowly, trying not to wake the other male as he grabbed his phone. He set an alarm so he'd wake up before the other boy, before leaning back in and holding him close.

If George wasn't ready, then no one needed to know.

Chapter Twenty Nine | Real

Dream woke up to his alarm, just like he intended to. He turned off the blaring noise, glad to see George hadn't even stirred in his sleep.

Dream was tempted to fall asleep again, still in George's warm, trusting embrace. But he managed to give George a pillow to cuddle with instead, slipping away and out of the room with a deep breath in and out.

When he felt less like his face would catch on fire any second, he walked downstairs and screeched at the sight.

Bad was awake, and he had somehow managed to scare the absolute shit out of Dream.

"Gotcha back." Bad grinned, and Dream's face was one of anger for a second before he 'humphed.

He heard a toilet flush and stared awkwardly at Sapnap as he walked out immediately after.

"What?" He asked, an eyebrow raised. Dream crossed his arms.

"Wash your hands, idiot." He said, and Sapnap groaned before he went back in and did so.

"Soo, why were you both awake? This early, too?" Dream looked up, eyebrow raised. He was genuinely confused.

"Well, we were going to wake you up but uhh..." Bad seemed to blush a bit. Dream's eyes widened.

"Shit." Bad smacked him, puffing up his cheeks.

"Language. I think Nick might have taken a picture, but I don't know-" Sapnap came back out, seeming a bit pissed.

"Hey! Snitches get stitches, Darryl." Sapnap recited, and Dream turned on him like a cornered animal.

"Listen, he did it in his sleep, okay? We were just scrolling through Twitter and he fell asleep and then started to cuddle me unconsciously. I don't want him to wake up and be embarrassed because of it." Dream said, panting a little by the end of it.

Sapnap blinked at him. He got out his phone and let Dream watch him delete the photo, and Dream's legs almost buckled with relief.

"Thank you, Nick." Dream said, and the name tasted strange on his tongue. Foreign.

"You know you can come to us for advice, right?" Sap said, and Dream felt the blush rising to his face.

"Wh- what?" He asked, and his body language was conveying confusion and shock in its purest form.

"You like George." Sap and Bad said at the same time like it was a fact. And, well, it was.

"Well- I-I mean, I-" Dream was having trouble forming words. It felt so surreal, talking about this without being shamed for it.

"Dude, relax. We don't think of you any differently or anything. Just know if you ever need any advice on how to tell him, were here."

Dream burst into tears, smiling and laughing. He wasn't being shamed for who he was. They both supported him for who he was.

He smiled shakily, pulling them into a three-way hug, sobbing into their shoulders, happiness and shock washing over him in waves.

They don't see him differently.

"Hey, I think we should go do something today. Maybe go to the furniture store? The three of us?" Bad suggested, and Dream was a bit confused.

"The three of us?" Dream asked, and Sapnap seemed on board with it.

"Well, George hasn't gotten his stuff yet, so he doesn't know if he wants to buy anything else yet, right?" Bad said, and Dream realized that yeah, that makes sense.

"Kay. Just let me go change into something." Dream said, but he grabbed a notepad, writing something so George would know where they're going.

He went to his room, smiling at the sight of George cuddled into his pillow. He placed the note on the nightstand for him to see when he woke up, going to the closet and grabbing a pair of light wash jeans and a white t-shirt to go under a pastel green and light grey windbreaker.

After pulling on his vans, he couldn't resist checking on George one more time before he left for the store with the other two.

He looked at George through the morning light, his pretty face illuminated by the rising sun. He looked perfect.

He went over to him, placing a kiss on his forehead before walking to the door, looking back one more time.

He closed the door quietly, walking downstairs to where bad and Sap were waiting. Sapnap called shotgun, even though Dream was convinced that Bad couldn't care less where he sat as long as he was with them.

Dream pulled up to the rooms to go, cringing a bit as bad jumped out of the car excitedly. He made eye contact with Sapnap, and they rolled their eyes in sync as they got out too.

"This place is huge!" Bad exclaimed, and Dream couldn't help but smile a bit at him. He had to admit, this place was pretty big.

They all walked in together. The plan was to have the furniture delivered to the house if any of it was too big to fit in the car.

Dream immediately went to the lighting section, Bad going to the decor and Sappy going to the furniture.

He smiled as his eyes caught on a box of led light strips. Wait, those weren't long enough. He had measured the perimeter of his roof since that was where he'd be sticking them.

After what felt like forever, he finally found some in around the right length. They could change twenty different colors, and it came with a remote to do so. He was satisfied as he put them in his cart, before going back to where Bad was, only to find Sappy there too.

Bad was explaining something to Sapnap when Dream got there, and he was a bit upset when he found out they were arguing whether or not Dream should be paying.

As Dream watched them bicker, he realized something he, arguably, should have a long time ago.

These friends of his, they... They weren't fake names behind a screen anymore. They were people. Real people who cared about him. Real, genuine people.

"Thank you, Darryl. Thanks, Nick." He said, and the names rolled off his tongue like butter as the two turned to look at him.

He could wait to get to know them as Darryl and Nick, rather than BadBoyHalo and Sapnap.

First chapter of the day.

Chapter Thirty | Blood

When they got home, Dream was happy to see George, waving at him as a little kid would wave at their crush. Darryl and Nick gave him a knowing look, and Dream laughed, snacking them on their back.

Dream was in a good mood, thanks to Darryl. He had decided that he and Nick should split the cost of Dream's lights, since Dream always helped pay for their stuff, and Dream was pleasantly surprised.

George smiled back at him from his place on the couch, with some of the leftover Carmel Corn and 'Supernatural' playing. Dream plopped down a good three feet away from him after he took off his shoes.

He got comfortable, leaning into the soft cushions of the couch and contemplating putting his arm around George, but deciding against it.

Dream didn't see Darryl and Nick look at each other and facepalm.

George looked happy, though. He seemed like he was glad the three of them were back, and that he wasn't alone in this huge house anymore.

And so Dream ate popcorn with the other, smiling and laughing. And then the tide turned as he laughed just a little too hard.

He was wheezing, and he knew what was about to happen. He went into the downstairs bathroom, coughing up what he needed to, the taste of blood never pleasant, but slowly becoming a norm for him.

He didn't let panic take over, or let himself overthink anything. He just made sure his face was clean, grabbed a water bottle to sip from, and once again sat close to George. He wanted this to be a good day, even if he had to force it.

He wanted to spend time with the one he loved before he had no more time to spend. And he'd rather not die before he mustered up the courage to confess.

The three people in the room seemed to work against his mood, even if they didn't realize it. They were all avoiding looking at Dream, let alone smiling at his jokes.

His easy smile slipped off his face as this truth met him; they couldn't be happy when he was so sick. They cared too much to be happy when he was like this; they were being constantly reminded of his disease, or at least the one they thought he had.

He huffed, going upstairs under the excuse that he had to put up his lights, which technically he should be doing all things considered.

And so Dream got to work, lining up the lights around his ceiling and drilling some holes in the wall where he needed to so the power cord wouldn't be visible.

But when he was done, his hands could no longer distract him from the thoughts that were digging their way out of the hole he shoved them away into.

They couldn't be happy if he was here. They couldn't be happy if he wasn't. So they just... Couldn't

be happy at all, could they?

Dream laid in his bed, curling up around a blank body pillow and crying into it, realizing a bit too late that he was exhausted as he slipped into sleep.

He was shaken awake.

George had decided that he would sleep on the couch tonight.

When he walked into Dream's room, he saw how horrible the bags under the boy's eyes were, and how peaceful he looked lying there. How much he needed a comfortable sleep.

He thought about how the night before, he slept well for the first time in a while. Even taking his medicine, sometimes his insomnia would get the best of him, but not last night. And, even better, he actually had a dream for once. One that wasn't a nightmare.

He turned the lights off as he changed clothes, taking off his binder so that he could sleep. Some days, the worst of them, he didn't even want to take it off. The next morning, if he told anyone he fell asleep in his binder, they would get worried about him.

So now, George always tries to remember to take it off at night.

He walked out of the bathroom, going to Dream's room to steal one of the blankets and two of the pillows Dream had brought in there for himself.

He went back to the couch, and he already was tired enough from his medicine to pass out as soon as his head hit the pillow.

George woke up to the sound of coughing. It was non stop and it sounded like the person coughing was in pain.

Something was drawing him upstairs. His mind was blank as he pushed the blankets off of himself, getting up and walking upstairs. The stairs creaked under his weight.

Tw, Gore.

He followed the sound, and it was the loudest as he walked to Dream's room. There was a thick, metal smelling brown liquid seeping under the door.

He opened it, and he was frozen in place, like his feet were rooted to the floor, no matter how much he wanted to turn around, to run away.

The room was covered in brown. It was dripping from the walls, the ceiling. There was no furniture, just brown.

Just blood.

In the middle of it was Dream, his organs hanging out of his mouth. He was coughing them up.

More blood spilled from his lips, and tears never stopped running down his cheeks. He was

terrified as he reached a desperate hand out to George.

Tw over.

George sat up, eyes wide. He was drenched in sweat. He jumped up, and he ran up the stairs.

Clay was fine. He was just sleeping. He was fine, sleeping in his room.

When George saw Clay, lying still on the bed, the room colored brown, panic surged through him. Tears ran down his face as he ran to the other boy. He grabbed his shoulder, shaking him.

"Wake up. Wake up, Clay!" And Clay's eyes opened, looking up at George, confused. The color of the room shifted to blue. It was his new lights. Clay was okay.

George clutched Clay close to him, putting his head on the boy's chest, listening to his heartbeat as he choked on his sobs.

Clay was okay, but it didn't change the fact that he was going to die.

Chapter Thirty One | Tease

Dream was at a loss for words as he rubbed circles on George's back, trying to calm the boy down enough to explain what had spooked him so bad.

Dream's best guess was a nightmare, or, more accurately, a night terror. He knew first hand how hysterical those can make a person, especially if it's out of the blue.

When George's sobs slowed down to hiccups, Dream angled pulled away enough to see his red flushed face. His own face was soft with compassion, yet drawn with worry.

"... Did you have a Nightmare, Georgie..?" He said, trying to make his voice soothing and reassuring. He wanted the boy in front of him to be at peace enough for at least a couple more hours of sleep.

"I- You- I just..." George was having trouble explaining himself. He just put a hand on Dream's stomach, making sure that he was still in one piece; Nothing was out of place, and George felt exhausted and relieved enough to pass out in the other boy's arms.

"I did. I'm... I'm glad you're okay." He said, pulling his hand away. Dream immediately felt himself missing the coolness of his touch against his constantly flushed and warm skin.

"Do you think you can fall asleep again..?" Dream asked, checking the time. It was one in the morning, he fell asleep just around six. He was wide awake.

"I... I think so, yeah. But..." George looked up at Dream, and his small sliver of hope shone clearly on his face as he asked,

"Can I stay?" He was desperate to stay with the taller male. Desperate to hold the boy in his arms until he was absolutely, without a doubt sure that he was okay. And it was in this moment that Dream had a stupid pinch of confidence.

Dream wrapped the other boy in a loose hug, leaning down to kiss the top of his head before petting his hair a couple of times.

George seemed to melt into the touch, and happiness ran through his veins like lava, lighting him up and keeping him warm.

"Of course you can stay. You can stay whenever you need." Dream said, leaning against his thankfully cushioned headboard. Even though he had slept for so much longer, Dream's relief was enough to make him drowsy again.

George snuggled into Dreams embrace, and Dream continued to pet his hair. Dream didn't know how long he sat there, comfortingly lulling the other boy deeper into sleep, but he knew that when sleep took him into his arms, he accepted it with a smile.

When George woke up, it was from someone Gently running their hand across his arm. He felt

warm, steady. He felt happy and at peace.

And when he saw Dream, a look of pure adoration on his face as he whispered 'Time to get up, Georgie' in his ear, his face burst into flames.

"G-Good morning, Clay." He said, and he didn't miss the small twitch of the boy's lips as he said his real name. His face felt like it would melt off, and he had no doubt he was blushing so furiously that even an idiot would notice.

"Good morning, Georgie. Did you sleep well?" Dream asked, trying to ignore the feeling of his numb leg as George pulled away from him to rub his eyes. He smiled at Dream, and Dream felt his heart squeeze in his chest.

"Yeah, actually... Thank you, Clay." George could see Clay's face change color a bit, and it made him smirk. But really, he was eternally grateful to have gotten a full night's sleep.

"It's no problem, Georgie. Any time." Literally, any time. It was a blessing to fall asleep with George in his arms.

When they went down, they saw Darryl making Breakfast. Darryl sent a smile towards Dream that George didn't really understand, but he was too happy to overthink it as he managed to sneak a piece of bacon off of the plate Darryl was putting it on.

Dream felt the heat rise to his face as he gave Darryl a playful glare, one that said 'don't you make fun of me, I'm having the time of my life'.

He smiled at George while he started nibbling on his prize. Darryl turned around when he was halfway through the savory treasure he had snagged.

"Hey!" Darryl said, pouting. He found it hard to believe that George snagged it right from under his nose. George froze for a second before shoving the rest of it into his mouth, causing Darryl to groan.

This boy was gonna be the death of him, Dream thought, and not for the first time as George trotted up to him, a smirk on his face, obviously pleased with himself.

And the shorter boy must've had a sudden burst of confidence, because he put his arm around Dream's waist for a split second before lightly dragging his arm across his skin and winking as he walked away, probably to get his phone and wait for breakfast to be ready.

The touch had Dream going wild, even though it was barely anything. The place his arm had been tingled slightly and Dream wanted him to touch him again.

Dream was staring after him, his face beet red and his jaw on the floor. Darryl laughed at him, less mocking and more 'i can't believe how in love this boy is'. Dream closed his mouth, finally, looking to Darryl and pointing behind him.

"Did that really happen?" He asked, and he felt a bit faint, like he needed to sit down. He felt a tickle at the back of his throat that signaled that he was gonna have a fit now, or an even worse one

later. He shoved the urge down, deciding to be happy right now.

"That really happened, Dream." He said, and Dream ran a hand down his face, grinning to himself like a high school kid in love.

If this boy was going to be the death of him, Dream would accept it with open arms.

Chapter Twenty Two | Toxicity

Today is the day.

Today is the day they sporadically go to a water park, and Dream finally confesses.

Dream deflated in the mirror. Who was he kidding? He was *not* ready for that. He probably never would be. But...

He wanted to be. He wanted to get enough confidence to take George out one on one, to actually kiss him and tell him he loves him. To tell him he wanted to be together.

But... He couldn't do that.

He was afraid of what George would say.

He felt a scratch at the back of his throat. It made Dream choke in the middle of his thoughts, blood practically forcing itself up his throat. He dropped to his knees, coughing into the toilet for the first time today, but he had a feeling it wouldn't be his last.

His entire body was shaking with strain as he coughed as hard as he could. There was something in his throat. It was bigger than it should be, he wanted it *out*-

His vision was starting to go white when whatever it was finally came up his throat, and he was finally able to breathe again, albeit shallowly.

He had to take deep breaths for a while and wait for his tears to slow down enough for him to look at what it was.

It was a bundle of two flowers, connected. They were probably about an inch and a half in radius each.

This shouldn't be happening as fast as it is.

He stood up, going to the scale in his bathroom, and weighing himself.

He lost five pounds over the last week. That's the most he's lost so far, but all things considered, he's lost thirty pounds of mostly muscle since his.. condition started.

He looked at himself in the mirror. If you didn't know him, he would look healthy, even attractive. But he had a natural bulk to him, usually. He used to play football in high school, and he always kept a habit of going to the gym regularly even after he graduated.

He was always muscular, with a bit of flab that he didn't mind. If anything, it only made him more cuddly.

But now he looked like... Well, he guessed he looked like a stereotypical gamer. Doesn't do anything but sit in his room and play, doesn't like sports, skinny. He looked like... Like he didn't care about himself. Like he let himself go.

He reached a shaky hand into his hair, pulling his hair hard enough for his scalp to burn. He didn't like this. He didn't like this version of him. The him he was the first half of high school. He despised this... Version of him.

He barely even liked himself how he was three weeks ago, before this whole thing.

He slammed his fist against the counter of his sink, feeling like he could scream with how frustrated he was. He looked at himself in the mirror, face red with rage, and he felt a tear slip past his face.

When he was angry, he looked a lot like his dad.

Dream came downstairs wearing swim shorts and a t-shirt rather than a skintight one. He had a hoodie over it so he could take it off when he swam.

He tried hard to smile, to be happy that they were going to be spending time together doing something exciting and interesting.

But he just couldn't bring himself to be happy. He couldn't smile as widely, couldn't laugh as loud, and his anxiety took hold of him, telling him that the other three could tell, no matter how hard he tried to hide how he felt.

The day of water and fun passed by in a blur, like Dream was watching himself through a screen. Controlling, but not entirely there.

He finally started to feel better, as he focused more on George's smile, his laugh. The boy was reviving him, slowly but surely. He was starting to feel more himself again as George tried to convince him to go on a huge water slide.

Dream watched his expression as he finally said yes, watched his pupils get blown wide and the smile take over his face as he grabbed Dream's hand, leading him up the stairs and past the line. They had gotten a cut in line wrist band.

He felt the last of his life get breathed back into him as he held on tightly to George as they went through the two to three-person ride, scared out of his mind, but listening to George's excited heartbeat and hearing his laughter.

It was half an hour later, an hour before closing time, that it all went to shit.

They were at an outdoor table near one of the many food courts, and Dream was daydreaming as he stared at George, who was absolutely devouring one of those huge soft pretzels.

He saw something behind him that made his breath catch, and his eyes go wide in surprise, and fear.

There, walking towards him, was Sam, a pretty girl hanging off of his arm.

Sam was handsome as always, his short spiked hair styled just *perfectly*, his muscles bulging as he flexed, showing off for the pretty, skinny, *perfect* redhead hanging on him and looking at Sam like she wanted to take a bite out of him.

Sam was too confident to even think about wearing a shirt while swimming, and Dream just hoped, prayed that Sam didn't see him.

Sam had cheated on him with, quote-unquote, 'someone who didn't need to pop pills to feel good about themselves'.

Dream could feel his heart breaking as Sam saw him, his hazel eyes lighting up, talking to his new plaything as he came up to Dream.

"Hey Clay! It's been a while. How have you been?"

Terrible.

"I've been pretty good, actually."

TW, Mentions of Contemplating Suicide and Vomiting

And just like that, he slipped behind the screen again, watching as he had a cheery conversation with the ex that made him want to kill himself just a couple months ago.

Before Dream knew it, he had escaped into a restroom, and he was spitting up bile, and for the first time, the stupid fucking disease didn't come with it.

TW over.

Chapter Thirty Three | What Was Real?

Dream wasn't there as he walked back to the boys, and he couldn't even pretend he was. His face was blank and he smelled like vomit, and I could barely nod when they asked him if he wanted to head back.

Darryl was more worried than he had a right to be, considering Dream was constantly insisting he was fine. But with how Dream was leaning on him, looking like a ghost of himself, how could he not worry?

He looked just a bit thinner, paler, clammy than he did a couple of days ago. He didn't look healthy. He looked malnourished and sick.

Darryl really wanted to take him to a doctor at least, a hospital if he needed to. He couldn't just... Watch his friend rot away, in denial about his own health.

Dream suddenly swayed, and for a second Darryl thought he would pass out, but then Dream walked over to George, leaning on him instead, and even he looked worried.

And even though Nick was trying to hide his emotions under a happy mask like he usually does, Darryl could tell he was concerned too by the way he constantly cracked jokes in Dream's general direction, trying to get even a smile out of him, to no avail.

George knew that something was seriously wrong when Clay went over to him instead of staying with Bad. He knew this as he wrapped his arm around the other boy's waist, comforting him as they walked to the car.

George helped Clay in before going to the other side, grateful that Nick could drive a stick shift as he felt Clay lean into his shoulder with a sigh.

Dream's body was ridged as he tried to relax enough to be comfortable in his own skin for long enough to get a pinch of rest, to come back a bit.

And then he felt it. He melted into the fingers of the one he loved as he traced his fingers through his hair.

George was at awe at how soft Clay's hair was. It was like silk, and he was entrapped by it as he continued to run his fingers through it.

Every time his fingers got to the tips of his locks, he ran them through again. Forty percent of the reason was that he wanted to make Clay feel better, and the other sixty was because of how soft his hair was, and how much he just wanted to pet him again and again.

Eventually, he heard Clay humming a song in the silent car. He hummed along to the beat the tires made on the highway, and Darryl must have recognized the song because he hummed along to it in harmony.

A ghost of a smile passed over Dream's lips, and he continued to hum until he fell asleep, comforted by his friend's combined presence.

George felt himself fall deeper as he gazed at the sleeping face of his best friend, handsome, pretty, and serene all at once.

When they got home, George somehow managed to get Clay on him, piggyback style. It was a tough three minutes, but he still managed to put Clay gently on the bed.

Clay was drowsy as he reached blindly for George as he went into the bathroom to take off his binder, grabbing the clean sweatshirt that Dream had changed out of this morning.

Clay was drowsy as he asked George to lay in bed with him. They were both drowsy as George slipped his hands under Dream's jacket, feeling the taller boy shiver.

They were both sleep-deprived and exhausted as they pulled each other close, Clay humming pleasantly as the shorter boy kisses his neck lightly.

They were exhausted when Clay whispered 'I love you', and made George's face light up as he buried his face in the other boy's chest.

He woke up, and Dream felt amazing. His dream last night made him grin, even if he woke up without George in the bed.

He turned on his Bluetooth speaker to listen to music in the shower, and he wasn't ashamed to sing out the lyrics and dance as the water pelted his back.

Dream was in a very, very good mood today. Almost like yesterday didn't even happen. And he really, really wanted it to stay this way.

He got dressed in his own merch, and since he was feeling reminiscent as he wore his limited edition two hundred thousand subscriber merch.

He nearly danced down the stairs, from how good his mood was. When things hit rock bottom, the only way out is up. This is what he told himself as he smiled at Nick and Darryl, oh, George was here too-!

Wait. Why were they looking at him like that?

"Guys, is something wrong?" Dream asked, and they all looked a bit sad, averting their eyes.

"Well, I mean, Dream.. We know." Dream froze in place for a second, but played it off.

"Know what?" Dream asked, stretching his arms above his head, and they popped loudly.

"You're sick. And it's not normal sick." Dream's bones suddenly creaked, and he dropped to one knee, feeling suddenly drained.

"Guys, I'm seriously confused-" Dream stated, looking at them with a wild look in his eyes, and he didn't know what to think anymore.

"You have Hanahaki, Dream," Sappan said. Dream felt his throat getting gravelly.

"The flowers are eating away at you," Darryl spoke this time.

"From the inside out." They said in sync, standing up to face him as blood dribbled down his lip, and his arms became boney.

"One..." Dream coughed loudly, falling to his hands and knees.

"Day..." Dream's arms shook from the strain of holding himself up.

"At..." Dream's hair started to fall out in clumps.

"A..." Dream's teeth started to rot away.

"Time." George finished, clicking his tongue as he went over to Dream.

"And all because you didn't tell me before. I'll never say yes, now that you look like this." And he shoved a mirror in his face.

He was a walking, decomposing corpse.

Chapter Thirty Four | Good Morning

When Dream woke up, he was afraid. He barely kept the scream that was in his throat at bay as he looked around him, seeing that George was blinking awake sluggishly.

When George's eyes landed on him, sweating, eyes darting around the room, muscles tense and twitchy, he knew Clay had had a nightmare.

He got Clay to look into his eyes, and he started to breathe steadily. Clay was quick to catch on as he slowly started to breathe in sync with him, his muscles relaxing as he gazed into George's deep brown eyes.

Dream found himself crying a bit as he suddenly grabbed George, pulling him close. He was relieved, so relieved that George didn't hate him.

George smiled as he hugged back, more gently. Clay was warm and surprisingly boney. Was he this boney the last time he hugged him?

When he was finally able to get it together, Dream pulled away to check the time. It was six-thirty in the morning, they could just get up right now. He smiled sadly at George.

"Sorry about that... I had a Nightmare too, I guess." He apologized, and George's expression softened.

"That's okay, Dream. It happens to the best of us." He said, and Dream couldn't help but thank whatever's up there that he loved someone so caring and awesome.

And then he cursed whatever's up there for giving him a disease that made it even harder to be around them.

He slipped out of bed, George following closely behind, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. Dream yawned, and George laughed at him as he yawned too.

"C'mon man, those are as contagious as the virus," George complained, slapping him on the shoulder as he said something about needing to piss, leaving Dream to go downstairs alone.

He was relieved when he saw the living room empty. He went to the fridge, picking through it and deciding on eating some hard salami as a snack.

George came down a minute later after putting his binder on, chuckling a bit at Clay's food choice.

"Breakfast of champions?" He asked, snagging a slice and taking a bite out of it, savoring the flavor.

"Definitely." Clay answered sarcastically, face in a deadpan as he ate another slice in one bite, or more accurately shoved the entire thing in his mouth.

George nearly choked from laughing, kick-starting Clay's laughter as he started wheezing like he always did. George used to find it annoying, but now he found himself basking in the sound.

As the sun started to rise, George dragged Dream out onto the back patio, only for Dream, in turn, to drag the shorter boy back up the stairs and into his room so they could look with the balcony's view.

And when George saw it, his jaw dropped. Dream watched George's face light up as he hummed a song, rubbing circles on George's back.

This was a good morning. He hoped it would lead to a good day.

Dream smiled to himself as he wrapped up his stream for the day, glad that he had only had to take a 'bathroom break' twice throughout it, when people kept asking about George.

He had a pretty productive day, having uploaded a video and asked a couple of questions on Twitter and everything. But then he saw a photo going around.

Twitch streamer and YouTuber GeorgeNotFound spotted on a plane Houston bound.

Dream nearly dropped his phone as he saw that George had taken a photo with a ginger-haired kid, while on his flight to Texas, probably. He almost wanted to choke from the fear and anxiety that surged into him.

George probably didn't think before this photo was taken. Dream told himself this as he took a deep breath, trying to calm down.

If they knew that he was in Texas, then it wouldn't be long until they realized he was here to stay.

He trusted George with his life, and he knew that he was almost definitely going to be the one who came up with an idea on how to get the photo deleted, and so Dream sent him the link just as he felt a scratching at the back of his throat.

George was a bit shocked as he saw the link Clay had sent to him. For some reason, he hadn't thought about how the photo he took with that kid could be shared, let alone used against him.

This wasn't good. George immediately wrote a complaint, it would probably be taken down in ten minutes or so, but the damages were already done. His feed and Sapnap's too, probably, were filled to the brim with questions about this photo.

He didn't know what to expect next, and he doubted there was anything he could do about this but hope and wait to see how it plays out.

George was quick to tell Nick, who apparently had already known, and had already told Darryl. None of them acknowledged or answered any of the tweets, deciding to ignore it and hope for the best in this situation.

George decided to upload a video Early so he wouldn't have to worry about it later. He wanted to have a bit of time just to hang out with his friends and be himself.

The sun was just barely past noon when he went up to Clay's room, going to knock on the door but hesitating as he listened.

Clay was coughing and hacking, and George wondered how long this had been going on, and how much longer this was going to be.

He sighed, sliding down to the floor with his back against the door, leaning his head against it.

Clay was a smart guy, George knew that. But... George was smart too.

From the petals to the blood, to the confession whispered in his ear the last night... George was sure he had put all the pieces together.

But the picture they created was one he was not willing to consider.

He shoved it to the back of his mind for another day.

Chapter Thirty Five | Not Good

Do you know the saying? Everything is calm in the eye of the hurricane? Or is it there is always calm before the storm? In his mind, it didn't really matter. In his mind, right now? It was all the same.

It had been just a week since the photo was posted on Twitter, and to say dream team twitter went absolutely rabid is an understatement. But it's cooled down now. In fact, everything has.

Including Dream's temperature. His normal warmth was lost, and to say George was confused was probably an understatement, but hell if Dream knew. George probably didn't even notice or care.

Any time the boys wanted to go out, Dream just apologized and used the excuse that he needed to record, or stream, or edit videos, or post about a milestone or like something on Twitter; He used any logical excuse to get out of going outside of the house.

He was terrified that someone would see them all together and know that, well, Dream was Dream.

He was scared. He was deathly afraid, and he was even more terrified that that phrase could almost be taken literally.

He was dropping pounds by the day. His throat was constantly raw from coughing. His skin was paler, his lips were redder, his hair was thinning just a bit.

And Dream was scared.

Dream was terrified all the time. Any movement spiked his heart rate. Any sudden noise made him scream. Any touch made him flinch and pull away.

Except for George. George was the only good thing right now.

When he saw George, the world burned at his feet. When he heard George, angels sang. When he smelled George, he couldn't bear to pull away. When he felt George, he never wanted to let go.

Through all the constant anxiety, constant fear, constant longing- Dream wasn't stupid, or clueless. He wasn't wondering what was happening. He wasn't unsure.

He knew exactly what was going on, and he knew he could do something about it. But he was afraid to.

Because what if it was too late?

He asked himself this as he looked at himself in the mirror one night, his checks shadowed and his eyes sunken; There was no more light in them.

He lived in a world of uncrossed 't's, and undotted 'i's. He lived in a world of constant hunger, constant stress, and it was constantly moving, ticking, time trickling on without him while he stayed and wondered and waited desperately for some sort of solution.

He was scouring the internet until his wrists ached, and that was when the anxiety wasn't gnawing at him. When it was, he would mimic it, gnawing at his lips, his fingernails, his nail beds.

He was frail and broken, falling apart and in love.

Tired. Tired of trying to face this huge, inevitable thing that was going for his throat. This force of nature.

It hurt, hurt, hurt. Everything hurt, whether it was a phantom pain or a bruise, a scar deciding to sting or a fresh scrape on his newly delicate skin- it all hurt.

And it hurt even worse when he was falling deeper and deeper, and the ecstasy becoming more and more inviting, the want to hold, to kiss, to keep him growing stronger by the day.

No matter how tired he was, he was plagued by horrible, gut-wrenching nightmares, because the disease didn't want him to sleep, it wanted him to think about a love he could never have, replaying the cycle of self-doubt and hopelessness on repeat until he broke.

Until he succumbed.

Until he gave in.

It wanted to break down his walls until they were nothing but rubble and dust in the air. It didn't care about him in the slightest; He was just nutrition, a sub-par meal to feed on.

When he stood up, his world spun. When he sat down, he never wanted to get up. When he got a break, he quite literally wanted to just die there.

TW, Suicide Contemplation

And he contemplated it.

He thought about it a lot.

Probably at least two hours a day he was psyching himself up, trying to convince himself to push the blade a little harder, slash it quickly across his wrists.

He had a noose made out of tied together sweatshirt strings.

And a second made out of unused wires.

He had a whole bottle of antidepressants he's stopped taking because it only makes things worse.

TW over

But he never had the guts to do it. He never had the guts to pull that metaphorical trigger.

He felt blind to the world, and George was the one thing he could see.

But he knew it was bad whenever he felt, literally, like he couldn't see.

The tunnel vision was so strong, that his mind melted away. It was like ferrofluid, and George was

the magnet. It was a struggle to navigate his room to even get to the food he hoarded away from the others, or to go to the bathroom.

He told the boys repeatedly not to worry about him. But this disease was trying to take him out in the worst way possible.

And he couldn't stand it.

Literally.

Now, when he tried to get up, his brain went completely white and he'd almost fallen over about a million times.

He knew this wasn't good. He was weak. He could barely feel anything. His senses were tuned in to George and nothing else. He could only hear George and reassure him that he was okay, and the others just had to take his word for it, because he couldn't hear them.

It got even worse when he was convinced he couldn't hear his own heart beat. He was sucked into silence suddenly, like one day he suddenly went deaf. The blindness was gradual, but this was sudden and terrifying.

It was the absolute worst when he couldn't feel anything anymore. He couldn't feel his clothes on his skin. He couldn't feel the carpet on his feet. He couldn't feel the warmth and small comfort of his sweatshirts.

This wasn't normal.

He was gone in every way. He was going insane. He could barely move, and when he did, it was like he had run a marathon.

It was time to end it.

Before he couldn't end it.

This can't go on any longer.

Dream crawled out of his closet, not trusting himself enough to walk all the way across the room.

He was close to the bathroom where he kept his blades; Just a couple more feet and he'd be there.

He tried to stand up.

He swayed.

The last thing he saw before the world was covered in darkness was the floor coming towards him, fast.

Chapter Thirty Six | Hospitalization

George was worried beyond belief.

Everyone else was too, but they would definitely agree with him if he said he was the most affected by it.

He found himself forgetting meals sometimes, and he could hardly sleep a wink without knowing what was wrong with Clay.

He hadn't seen Clay's face in days. The taller boy had locked himself in his room, and George had no idea what to do or why he was doing it.

George was talking with Nick and Darryl in the living room on this specific day.

"Guys... I'm worried about him." Darryl said, looking towards the staircase longingly.

"Tell me about it, honestly," Nick responded, his eyebrows drawn back a bit to show that he wasn't being sarcastic.

"Yeah. Something is obviously-" Then there was a loud thud, and they were frozen in shock for a moment before Nick jumped into action.

"Darryl, call nine one one! C'mon George- let's go!" Nick said, dragging him off of the couch until his body caught up with the moment and they raced up the stairs.

Nick had to kick open Clay's locked bedroom door, and George ran in, gasping when he saw Clay.

"Why.. Why would he hide this from us?" George thought out loud, running his fingers across Clay's cheek before Nick picked him up bridal style. They had to wait for an ambulance to come, and when it did, the blinding lights flashed over George's face.

They sat in the ambulance with him, his heart rate alarmingly slow. George began to pray, as he unashamedly leaned over Clay and kissed his forehead.

Please, please let him come out of this alive.

In the end, George has pushed away. They had to diagnose him, take care of him.

When the doctor came back, she came bearing bad and good news.

"Your friend, Clay, he's been diagnosed with what is a very unresearched disease called Blumen Werfen, which translates directly into 'throwing up flowers'. It's known in the media as Hanahaki disease."

Doctor Sage informed George. He began to tremble a bit, and he felt like crying.

"He flatlined twice before we were able to get him into a stable enough condition to be moved into

a hospital room." George flinched at the news.

"But, on the contrary, a charity foundation that is specifically for this disease found his case interesting, and they are going to pay for the shot which will take immediate action into killing the disease and eradicating it from his system."

George could have fallen to the floor in relief at this. Clay was going to be okay. Clay was going to survive this. It wasn't too late to confess.

"They will send someone to talk to him when he is awake." George looked up, confused. The doctor seemed to realize something.

"We have him in a medically induced coma until the disease is eradicated from his system. However, you can still visit him."

And George did. Once every two days he would visit Clay. Once every two weeks he would hold his hand and tell him about the world, only the good things though.

Every time he visited, Clay looked a little better. A little bit more alive.

He's confessed countless times now. He's said 'I love you. See you soon.' every time he left the hospital room.

It had been a month since Clay was first Comatose. George wasn't looking good. The bags under his eyes were terrible, and he always felt tired, but he couldn't sleep.

But this time, he couldn't handle it.

"It's your anniversary.." George spoke, his voice breaking. He shouldn't be crying. Clay would be awake any day now. They were no longer inducing a coma onto him.

"Please, please come back to me," George said, his voice a whisper, tears sliding down his cheeks.

"I miss you. I want to hold you and hug you again. And I want to tell you how I feel in person when your eyes are open and you can say the same thing back." George confessed, body shaking as he buried his face in his comatose crushes chest.

And then he felt a shaking hand brush over his hair.

George looked up slowly, hope in his eyes.

He saw Clay's looking back, and that he was crying too.

"I love you, George." Clay said, and his voice was nearly gone. George choked on his tears.

"I love you too, Clay."

The next two weeks Clay dropped in and out of consciousness, but George visited every day so he could be there along the way.

It was rough on him, he'll admit it. Every time Clay dropped back into unconsciousness, George would be afraid that he'd never wake up again.

But he was proven wrong every time. Every time he heard Clay's voice again, it gave him hope.

Until Clay was finally awake for good.

Dream was sad for George when he had first woken up. He had hurt him without meaning to. He should've just asked him.

But now, he got to see him every day. They were still doing small gestures, like hand-holding and hugging. They had never kissed.

Darryl and Nick would swing by every once in a while. And then Dream realized something.

They didn't call him Dream anymore. He was Clay.

And this led him to a huge realization.

Dream was someone who was afraid. Dream was constantly drowning in ankle-deep anxieties that just kept crawling their way up to his legs and body.

Dream was someone who hid behind a mask. He never displayed his true self to others, even the ones he cared about.

Dream always doubted he could ever truly be happy. He was never sure if the world thought or felt the same way he thought or felt, and it constantly scared him.

Dream wasn't who he wanted to be. Dream didn't see the good things in life.

And now, through this experience, maybe he could leave Dream behind.

He told a joke as he kissed George's hand, just to hear him giggle.

Maybe, just maybe... Maybe he could be Clay instead.

Chapter Thirty Seven | Recovery

Clay had to stay in the hospital for at least another month. Or, at least, that's what the doctors told him.

Honestly, he believed them the second he tried to stand up for the first time since he was admitted. Clay grunted as his legs twitched a bit under his own weight. It had been a month and a half since he'd been on them, so this was supposed to happen.

Clay saw the good in this. He was able to stand up for five minutes before his legs started to shake, and his fitness trainer said this was great news.

Clay, through all this, somehow felt better than he had in years. To him, it was like the world decided to kick him down a notch and teach him a lesson about how good his life was.

Day by day things got better. Soon he could stand for ten minutes, fifteen, half an hour. And then he could walk again.

Walking for the first time in two months was exhilarating in a way you could never understand without being in Clay's shoes. It made him want to smile and laugh and cry all at once.

George was with him along the way, encouraging him, supporting him, and just being there for him. Clay constantly thanked whatever's up there that George was here for him.

Clay had started to lift weights in physical therapy, and he would be lying if he said it wasn't tough. A couple of times he'd thought about giving up and dropping the five-pound weights.

When he felt like this, George would say things that made his heart melt, and his determination flare-up bigger than before.

"If you can't lift that, how will you piggyback me in the pool to chicken fight with Nick and Darryl?"

"If you can't walk through this water then how do you expect to run into my arms?"

And Clay's absolute favorite...

"When you can jog five laps around this room without needing a break, I'll give you a kiss."

Clay sighed dreamily just thinking about it. George was the light of his life even in these dark times, giving him hope when there is slim to none.

George was there with him more often than he wasn't. The days he wasn't there were the ones he worked the hardest, so he could surprise George with his progress the next day.

Dream's PT instructor was a very, very supportive member of the LGBT community. She and Clay talked a lot, her gushing about her girlfriend and Clay gushing about George.

He and George were adamant about not putting a label on this... Thing they had until Clay was recovered enough to continue making videos. They wanted to go public with it, but at the same time, they weren't sure if that was the smartest thing to do.

Anyways, Brie was a very, very physically apt dark-skinned woman whose presence demanded respect, but her personality was very supportive and understanding. Clay knew that he would most

likely be friends with her even after he recovered.

One day while Clay was going through his usual schedule, a stranger came through the door. They were a tall lanky boy, probably about an inch or two shorter than Clay, with freckles and wire-rimmed glasses. They spotted Clay and smiled nervously, clipboard in hand as they went over to him.

"Hey, I'm Jared and I'm with Roses and Thorns?" Clay recognized the name of the charity foundation that had come up to support him, and his face lit up as he stuck a hand out to shake.

"Hey, I thought it was weird that no one had come here yet! What's up?" Clay pulled his hand away, glad to see that Jared's shoulders relaxed a little bit. He must be new to this sort of thing.

"We just wanted to check in with you, see how you're doing, maybe ask a few questions..?" Jared asked quietly like he was nervous.

"Yeah, of course! Uh, if you have any questions about my recovery physically you can ask Brie for the gory details." Jared smiled and shook his head.

"Uh, we actually want it from your perspective, if that makes sense?" Clay was a bit surprised at first before he nodded in understanding.

"Well, what would you like to know?"

Well, the next hour and a half were filled with questions and answers, and Clay even noticed that the boy wrote in shorthand, which really surprised him.

He honestly didn't know what shorthand was until his mom told him about his grandmother, and seeing it in this day of age was so rare that it kinda shocked him.

The conversation was pleasant and not at all rushed, causing Clay to be more specific with his wording, but he would be lying if he said he wanted to just go to bed after all that talking.

The boy said that whenever he wanted he could call the company and tell his story, and Clay thanked him as he was leaving, ready to pass out.

It was at the two and a half month mark that Clay didn't say a word to George when he visited the PT room to see him.

Clay just grabbed him by the shoulders, putting him in the center of the room, and motioned for him to stay right where he was.

And with that, Clay began to jog.

The first lap was the easiest for him, as was expected. He jogged at a slower pace, not wanting to waste what little stamina he had built up over the past month.

The second and third laps were about the same levels of unpleasant, just breathing a bit heavy.

The last two made his legs tremble a bit, but he was determined, and it was so worth it when he finished the final lap and walked back up to George, panting.

His eyes were wide, and he was grinning from ear to ear as he quickly wrapped Clay up in a hug, laughing a bit.

"I'm so happy. That... This is awesome." George said as he leaned away, looking up to Clay and

seeing that his face was full of adoration and love. The look was so intense that George started to blush a bit as he smirked, reveling in the attention.

"Now, here's your prize." He grabbed the collar of Clay's shirt, pulling him down and meeting him halfway, on his tiptoes.

It wasn't fireworks as they kissed. It wasn't like the world had changed forever. But everything did melt away as Clay grinned into it before pulling away.

The pure happiness on the other boy's face made George lean in to kiss him again.

Epilogue | Begonias

Clay hummed to himself as he tipped over the watering cans, the plant taking every drop like it was dehydrated.

Clay went back in, smiling as he saw Nick and Darryl still playing the game of Monopoly that they started two hours ago.

He was glad they could keep busy, but it was getting a bit late. He should probably make dinner.

He refilled the watering can before heading back into the welcoming summer heat.

His expansive garden welcomed him.

It was beautiful; There were four different plots of land, each growing two different fruits or vegetables. There were vine fences covered in greenery, and a whole greenhouse nearby.

Clay had decided to take advantage of the expansive backyard, and after he got out of the hospital a year ago, he thought gardening would be a good workout too.

Clay smiled as he went to the garden, watering his flowers.

These plans were more.. a reminder. They were determined and beautiful flowers. He chose them for obvious reasons.

Once he figured out the species of flower that haunted him, he knew what he wanted to do. Everyone was confused by it, but he knew it would help him in the long run. Now, instead of being terrified of pink flowers, he felt a flush of pride.

He gently placed his fingers under the petals of the pretty flower, picking it and placing it into his hair, behind his ear so it would stay.

He continued watering the garden, picking weeds when he found them. When he was done tending to it, he went started getting things for tonight's dinner.

He picked the green and red bell peppers carefully, grabbing four of them. Then he went over to the shallots, picking just enough in place of onions, which weren't in growing season.

He didn't originally plan on keeping his garlic plants, but they were determined to stick around. He pulled one up, brushing some dirt off.

He picked some cucumbers, Bean pods, and some cabbage before heading in.

Nick was there when he got there, smirking at him.

"So how's it going, Greenie?" Clay chuckled at the nickname. Green was his favorite color, and the color of his thumb, so Sapnap was quick to pick up the nickname.

"Pretty good," Clay answered as he went to the sink to rinse off the vegetables. As he finished and started to dry them off he realized something.

"Oh, forgot the tomatoes. Be right in." And he was right in after he got the juicy red fruits.

As soon as he had everything in and rinsed, Darryl was there, helping him get everything set. They

were going to have black beans and rice with homegrown salad on the side. Clay smiled to himself as he popped the black beans out of the pods.

Clay had gotten better at cooking these past months, and this was obvious as he cut the shallots with ease.

The second he put the knife on the cutting board, letting his guard down, a familiar pair of arms slipped around his waist. Clay yelped a bit in surprise, before laughing off his initial surprise.

"Hey, sunshine." Clay said, lifting his arm to get George within forehead kissing distance. George chuckled at him, before grabbing his chin to get a real kiss, quick and sweet.

The smaller boy took a deep breath through his nose, humming. The rice had finished cooking since Clay had started it earlier, while he was gardening. Darryl was busy starting on sauteing the shallots that Clay had just handed to him.

"What's for dinner tonight?" George said lowly, his voice doing that thing that sent shivers down Clay's spine. Clay turned around, glaring at him for a second before he started to cut the bell peppers.

"It's black beans and rice with bell peppers and shallots. And salad." George snuggled deeper into his boyfriend's back, smiling.

"You act like you aren't more proud of your garden than your YouTube channel." Clay laughed at this as he scraped the peppers into a bowl, setting it on the counter next to Darryl for when he needed them. Darryl smiled and thanked him.

Since the beans were fresh, they cooked faster. Dinner would probably be done in the span of half an hour.

"Want to get started coding that plugin?" Clay asked George, who smirked at him in return.

"Maybe we could do something else..?" George asked, his eyebrows moving suggestively. Dreams face lit up, and George laughed, smacking him on the shoulder.

Dinner was great, as it always was now that Clay and Darrell were partners; Clay would grow, and most of the time, Darryl would cook.

Clay hummed as he and George worked together doing the dishes, smiling at one another. Then he got the phone call.

Clay picked up the phone, and his expression lit up in recognition as he heard Jarred, that boy from oh so long ago.

"Yeah, I can do that."

It was around ten in the morning, and Clay had set up some chairs in his garden, his flowers to the right, and a camera crew across from him.

He was dressed in a normal white button-up, and his gardening jeans, which were a stained up pair of light wash jeans, with holes worn through the knees. He couldn't help but smile.

Jarred had made progress. He was now recording interviews to go on the charity webpage. He was more confident, but still just as kind as he was the last time they met.

Speaking of the last time they met, all of the questions were about the symptoms of the disease and how they had affected Clay. It was about traumas.

This interview was more about the way he got through it, and how well he'd recovered from it. The upside of the worst of it.

When they were nearly done, Jarred finally asked the question.

"So, did you ever figure out which species of flower it was?" This made Clay smile.

"Yes, Actually."

He reached over to the potted plant at his side.

"These are the very same flower that caused me so much pain, grown from seeds into what you see now."

"These are my Begonias."

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